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THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR THE OFFERING

A THESIS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

		PAGE
	ABSTRACT.....	1
CHAPTER		
I	THE THEORY OF SACRIFICE	3
II	SACRIFICE IN THE "J" DOCUMENT	17
III	THE "E" DOCUMENT and SACRIFICE	35
IV	THE IMPACT OF THE PROPHETS UPON THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM	48
V	THE "D" DOCUMENT'S DESCRIPTION OF SACRIFICES . . .	60
VI	SACRIFICE IN THE "P" DOCUMENT	70
VII	THE SACRIFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT . . .	84
VIII	JESUS, HIS TEACHING AND EXAMPLE	95
IX	GIVING IN THE WORK AND TEACHING OF SAINT PAUL. . .	108
X	THE OFFERING IN THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH	123
	CONCLUSION	130
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	135

ABSTRACT

> Then shall the Offerings of the People
> be collected and presented.....
> Or else, the Offerings may be received
> after the sermon.
> [1]

> Here the Offerings of the People shall be collected and presented; and the Bread and Wine shall be prepared for the Sacrament; and a Psalm or Hymn may be sung.[2]

This thesis is an attempt to show the Biblical basis for the offering. The origin of the offering is in the sacrificial system of the Old Testament. In the Bible every sacrifice was an offering. The oldest word for sacrifice in the Hebrew is minchah, which signifies a gift or offering. However it should be made clear that all offerings are not sacrifices. By offering, we are signifying a gift to God - it is not to be confused with a secular gift given as a bribe to a fellow human being.

At the outset it appeared that this thesis would show a marked development from early Old Testament sacrifices to Paul's collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem. It was felt that the change which would be observed would be in the Old Testament offering given to receive God's favour and the New Testament offering given to God out of sheer gratitude for all of God's blessings. It was discovered that in the sacrificial system, gifts were given for these and other complex reasons. Many of the highly developed principles supporting the sacrificial system were adopted by the early Christian church and influenced the practices and thinking of the people. In the Old Testament the offerings were part and parcel of the sacrificial system. In the New Testament the offering, instead of being only the collection for the support of the church, refers to the offering of the wholeness of a man's personality.

1. The Book of Common Order, The Public Worship of God, p.2.
2. The Book of Common Order, The Lord's Supper. p.112.

The offering is placed in the setting of worship which is understood to be the response of the creature to the Eternal. Primitive peoples had the idea that there must be some relation between human beings and the divine power that made them and the universe in which they lived. Primitive worship took the form of offerings of the earth sacrificed to the Gods in recognition of their creative powers and to secure their favour. In the Old Testament ritual practices and cult patterns in worship are associated with the offering of sacrifice. This ritual worship allowed and encouraged the expression of the religious feelings and sentiments of the individual.

In the New Testament, the spiritual teachings of the sacrificial system are carried forward and developed as the basis for Christian Worship. The offering of material things is only a limited part of the worship of the people. Study of this offering shows that the motives of the individual making the offering are the criterion by which its value is to be judged. In the New Testament the point is made that worship itself is the total offering of the Christian. That offering consists of the thanksgiving of adoring hearts that have been stirred by a fresh perception of the wonder of God's grace in Christ.

> Perhaps the most significant development in human religion has been the movement of the idea of sacrifice from propitiation to love. This transformation, affecting the deepest levels of the spiritual life, has been both evoked and expressed through the experience of worship and finds its consummation in the Christian Eucharist. Here then we see again the double movement at the heart of worship; man incited to offer, urged to a movement of generosity, that so a channel may be opened through which God can give.[1]

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1. Evelyn Underhill, Worship, p.52.

CHAPTER I

THE THEORY OF SACRIFICE

Introduction to the Old Testament

Any study of the offering has to begin sooner or later with an understanding of the theory of sacrifice. In the Old Testament sacrifice has to be considered in its relationship to the whole cultic system which includes the influence of the prophets. The practice of tithing with all its various forms will be studied in the Old Testament materials. The chapters dealing with the Old Testament will follow the"Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis", as discussed by C. A. Simpson in The Interpreter's Bible.[1] The study will consider the descriptions of the sacrificial system of Israel from the points of view of the Yahwistic "J", Elohistic "E", Deuteronomic "D" and the Priestly "P" documents.

There are two things to be kept in mind in a study of this kind. The first thought is the idea of development. Some people prefer the word 'evolution'. It is not growth in terms of becoming bigger and better. There is danger in latching on to the theory that all these things are being improved and are moving towards a perfect state. The sacrificial system, like all institutions, grew from simple to more complex forms, adding new meanings and outdating some of the former ones. There seems to be little in common between the offering of Abel, with neither priest nor sanctuary and the detailed system described in the first chapters of Leviticus, which were administered at the religious capital in the only orthodox temple. However the one slowly gave place to the other in varied degrees. In early Semitic days the number of

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1. C. A. Simpson, "The Growth of the Hexateuch", an article in The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 1, p. 185.

sacrifices increased to correspond to different situations, occasions and attitudes. Peace and prosperity prompted one kind of sacrifice while times of distress, tragedy and darkness called forth some other forms. As ideas concerning the nature of Yahweh became more complex and perhaps more complete, so did the form of the sacrificial system. James Muilenburg writes "The religion of the fathers was not the same as the worship of the Thundering Yahweh of Sinai. The God pictured in Genesis is not like the God who reveals himself to Moses in the Book of Exodus".[1] God is the same yesterday and forever and therefore it follows as man's knowledge of God has increased so the practices of His worship have changed. When thinking of development, it must be recognized that there are periods of improvement and others of regression, experiences that are dynamic and others that stagnate.

A second consideration to be kept in mind is the influence of the environment which modifies and may add to or take away from the form of development. This means that the life and practices of Israel were directly affected by their surroundings. Here is an example of what is meant.

In the Nomadic period the Hebrews were shepherds with only a passing interest in the land around them. By reading about Abraham we see that their life was simple. They moved from one place to another in search of pasture - from Bethel, to Egypt, to Shechem - always on the move. Their homes were tents and their possessions were the flocks they herded over the hills. When they entered Canaan, the promised land, they

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1 James Muilenburg, "The History of the Religion of Israel", article in The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 1, p 297.

tended to settle down in more permanent dwellings and as they did this their interest in the land about them increased and they became more active in agriculture. In time, many became town dwellers, rejecting their nomadic ways of living in the out of doors. They followed new occupations and learned new crafts, including building, weaving, pottery and metal work. Few people can settle into another country with established cultural folkways and mores and not assimilate and adopt some of those ways. The Israelites were no exception and the social transitions are certainly evident as they settled in Canaan.

During their wanderings as nomads in and around the Fertile Crescent the sacrifice consisted of a blood offering of an ox, a sheep or a goat. Then as their existence changed from pastoral to agricultural their sacrifices were vegetable offerings, whether of oil, meal or cakes. To the ancient communion sacrifice of the Pascal Lamb (pesah) was added the Festival of Unleavened Cakes (maccoth), a Canaanite traditional religious festival. The former was the firstling of the flock and the latter was the first-fruits of the corn (Exodus 34:26.). The Festival of Unleavened Bread in time became the dominant part of the Passover celebration, changing the purpose of the Passover. At least this seems to be the suggestion which can be taken from King Josiah's command in II Kings 23:22. The Feast of the Harvest and the Feast of the Ingathering (Exodus 23:16) are two other annual Canaanite agricultural festivals which were transformed by Hebrew thought and faith into important sacrifices to Yahweh.

The agrarian Canaanites with their fertility cults emphasized the

importance of the sun far more than did the pastoral Hebrew migrators. This influence expressed itself in the establishing of particular times when sacrifices must be made, particularly the three agricultural festivals (the Unleavened Bread, Harvest and Ingathering). Oesterley judges from the names that have survived, the ancient Hebrew year was taken over from the Canaanites, Abib the first month (Exodus 13:4) about April; Zif, the second month (I Kings 6:1) about May; Ethanim, the seventh month (I Kings 8:2) about October; and Bul the eighth month (I Kings 6:38) about November. The Babylonian Assyrian names were adopted later.[1]

From extra biblical sources there is evidence that sacrifices of the first-born of men were common in Canaan before the Israelite infiltration. Macalister in his excavations at Gezer,[2] found under the temple floor, jars containing infants, who were believed to have been sacrificed at birth. Oesterley reports other excavations which provide evidence of human sacrifice.

> This practice must have had a decided influence on such Israelite sacrifices as the episode when Jephthah sacrificed his only daughter to Yahweh as a burnt offering ('olah) (Judges 11:30-40) and the slaying of Agag in pieces by Samuel before Yahweh in Gilgal. (I Samuel 15:32-33)[3]

These are only three illustrations of the influence of the Canaanite influence upon the sacrificial system of the Israelites. If we were to take later periods we would see the influence of other cultures. The period of the Babylonian captivity for instance made the Israelites realize that the Temple of Jerusalem was not the only place where Yahweh could be worshipped.

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1. W. O. E. Oesterley, Sacrifices in Ancient Israel, p. 112
2. Ibid p.114.
3. Ibid p.116.

As a matter offact the exile was the impetus for the re-thinking and reforming of the whole sacrificial system as we will see later.

A second influence that acted upon the institutions, habits and thoughts of this transitory people was that of the neighboring peoples who surrounded their country. All through the Old Testament we can see expressed, bits and pieces of Babylonian civilization and tradition. The book of Genesis utilizes many Babylonian myths to explain the fundamental truths about the nature of God and that behind the universe is God. The Babylonians made sacrifices to Marduk, their deity, which were similar to those offered by the early Hebrew nomads. According to Professor S. H. Hooke, "the Babylonians offered sacrifices as gifts to their deity because they believed that their God owned the land".[1] Many scholars such as Zimmern, Burgrey and Langdon[2] believe that the technical Hebrew term "kipper" on which rests the meaning of the propitiation of sins by sacrifice, was borrowed by the Jews from the Babylonians, causing this technical expression to develop into the meaning of "to wipe away". Scholars are careful not to underestimate the Babylonian influence when discussing the sacrificial system of Israel.

Therefore, in considering the place and significance of the offering with regard to Old Testament Sacrifice there are two distinct characteristics to be noted. The first is its internal development which has to be kept clear of any theory of natural growth to something bigger and better. The second characteristic is the interaction with neighbors and environmental conditions

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1. W. O. E. Oesterley, Sacrifices in Ancient Israel, p.57
2. Buchanan Gray, Sacrifices in the Old Testament, p. 70

The Origin of Sacrifices

The debate of the last century was over the question as to whether sacrifices were divinely ordered or commanded or whether they were simply devised by man as a way for satisfying the fears and desires created by his religious convictions. The idea that sacrifices were instituted by divine command found favourable support among many of the Reformers, even though it could not be sustained by Biblical narrative. The "J" document appears to treat sacrifice as a natural self-expressive mode of worship. The whole argument that sacrifice was ordained by God and suggested to man by Him, stands or falls on the theory of primitive revelation, which has been generally discounted by theologians. Were Cain and Abel commanded by God directly or indifectly to offer the sacrifice of the fruit of the land and the firstlings of the flock? We read "the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering He had no regard". (Gen. 4:4,5, R.S.V.) If sacrifices were commanded, why was one accepted and the other not? Those who advocate this theory use the Apostolic reference found in Hebrews 11:4, which reads "by faith, Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice". They point out "by faith" necessitates a previous revelation giving them instructions, but we have no evidence for such a presupposition. To account for the origin of sacrifice by such an hypothesis is rather precarious.

The universal prevalence of sacrifice among the heathen nations suggests that sacrifice was in many ways a natural expression of man's sense of his relation to God. We must remember that the roots of Israel's sacrificial system go far back into the nomadic period in which the Hebrew ancestors were only members of the Semitic race, just as were the Baby-

lonians and Canaanites. These peoples had many similar sacrificial practices. "The only sense in which the Divine origin can be held is that by creating man for Himself, God is the author of the Institution in which the religious sentiment found ancient and universal expression".[1]

We cannot draw the conclusion that the sacrificial system was instituted only by human behaviour. The Old Testament teaching of the divine origin of laws, particularly the Law of Moses, cannot be flatly denied. When we look for the reasons why man offers sacrifices there are many answers. This study, which will include three major theories concerning the origin of sacrifice, will attempt to show the influence of man and Yahweh and the relationships of each to the other.

1. The Gift Theory Scholars have indicated the sacrifices originated because men believed in supernatural beings whose favour could be obtained by offering a gift of one's own possessions. The deities worshipped by primitive man were often strange images and objects, some with mighty power, and most of them could be made happy by being lavished with gifts. The desire to please the deity was foremost in the intention of the worshippers. In his book Primitive Culture, E. B. Tylor writes,

> The gift theory, as standing on its own independent basis, properly takes the first place. That most childlike kind of offering, the giving of a gift with, as yet, no definite thought how the receiver can take or use it, may be the most primitive as it is the most rudimentary sacrifice.[2]

Buchanan Gray in Sacrifices of the Old Testament supporting the gift theory of sacrifices observes that "not all sacrifices ever were, or came to be, treated as nothing but gifts".[3]

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1. A. B. Davidson, Theology of the Old Testament, p. 223.
2. E. B. Tylor, Primitive Culture, p. 375.
3. Buchanan Gray, Sacrifices in the Old Testament, p. 13.

He suggests that because the sacred gifts consisted mostly of food and feast-material of animals and vegetables, that they may even be rooted in the early period of primitive thought when it was believed that the gods actually consumed human food. This view persisted through many centuries. In Psalm 50, an Asaphite Psalm, God asks the question, "Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?" The implication here is that some Jewish contemporaries of the writer of this Psalm actually believed that Yahweh did just that. Gray writes,

> The authors of certain earlier passages in Hebrew literature seem themselves to express or at least, to be in close touch with such an age that held the belief that the god of the Hebrews, like other gods, derived sensuous pleasure from the food that was offered to him; that like men, he was made merry with wine, and that if he did not actually eat the flesh of the sacrifice, he yet smelt with satisfaction the fumes of the burning flesh.[1]

In the "J" document Yahweh smells the soothing savour of Noah's burnt offering (Genesis 8:21). In Leviticus 26:31 Yahweh will not smell the sweet odors of the disobedient. By the time of Amos the idea of Yahweh enjoying the odours of sacrifice had been superseded, but the prophet uses the language and declares God will not smell the burnt offering (Amos 5:21). David is convinced that Yahweh smells the savour of his gifts (I Samuel 26:19). Jotham in Judges 9:13 believed that gods, like men, are made happy with wine. Gray points out further that,

> even if it seemed safe to look upon the terms used even in these passages, as not intended literally, if here, as unquestionably in later literature, such as Ezekiel and "P" the terms were merely petrified expressions preserving the forms of once living, but long dead beliefs, yet the close relation of the narrator of Noah's burnt offerings to the Babylonian story of the sensuous enjoyment of the gods of the fragrant incense burnt for them by Noah's Babylonian counterpart, leaves us in no doubt in what belief the expressions arose: some of the gifts made to the gods were regarded as being most directly and materially accepted by them for their own sensuous enjoyment and this belief accounts, not only for expressions, but also for ritual that endured long after the belief had been abandoned by the Jews.[2]

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1. Buchanan Gray, Sacrifices in the Old Testament, p.22
2. Ibid. p.22.

Herbert Spencer attributes the origin of sacrifice to the custom of leaving food and drink at the graves of the dead.[1] As an ancestral spirit rose in and to divine rank, the refreshments placed at the grave for the dead became in fact the offering of a gift.

Any theory that claims that the origin of sacrifice is in the desire to give gifts, has to face the problem that to the levites there cannot be a more desirable sacrifice than blood. This does not seem to be a particularly desirable gift. Therefore there must be other reasons for the offering of sacrifices. However, as can be noted, the gift element is most frequently evident, especially in the early sacrifices.

2. The Homage-Sacrifice Theory Frequently primitive man would express himself in action rather than words to explain an idea. Words were simply inadequate to express what primitive man really wanted to say. This is also true to a degree of our own civilization. Men seek closer communion with God because they feel dependent upon and obedient to Him. By sacrifices, the primitive man thought he could receive security and friendship from the mighty deity. In this way the chasm between the mighty and the insignificant could be bridged. To accomplish this the primitive man fell back upon the universal language of action, which he felt was far more powerful than mere words. Maurice in his book Sacrifices expresses this idea clearly:

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1. Herbert Spencer, Principles of Sociology, p.277

> To Abel and Cain, there came thoughts of one who is ruling them as they rule sheep, who in some strange way makes the seed grow, which they put into the ground ... how shall they confess Him and manifest their subjection? Speech, thanksgivings are not the most childlike way of testifying homage. Acts go before words.[1]

Thus sacrifices expressed various feelings of reverence, thanksgiving, penitence, trust, with which men might approach the Higher Powers.

3. Communion Sacrifices Similar to the thinking underlying the homage theory is that used by those who advocated that the early animal sacrifices in their primitive forms were a sacramental ritual act by means of which the worshippers became united with the god. Robertson Smith is the father of this school of thought. He wrote in his masterly work The Religion of the Semites, that

> the predominance assigned in ancient ritual to animal sacrifices corresponds to the predominance of the type of sacrifice which is not a mere payment of tribute, but an act of social fellowship between the deity and the worshippers ... and
>
> the leading idea in the animal sacrifices of the Semites ... was not that of a gift made over to the God but an act of communion in which the God and his worshippers unite by partaking together of the flesh and blood of a sacred victim.[2]

Taking this view, Robertson Smith realized that sacrifice in its origin was connected with totemism, which designates a form of society in which the members of a clan believe themselves to be united by kinship to some animal, from which the clan is supposed to have descended. Partaking of the animal they partake of their god, since every animal of its own kind was indissolubly connected by a tie of kinship. However, Smith did not maintain that all gods were of totemistic origin. He wrote:

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1. F. D. Maurice, Sacrifices, p. 6.
2. Robertson Smith, The Religion of the Semites, p. 136.

"We do not suppose that every local deity will have totem association, for new gods as well as new sanctuaries might doubtless spring up at a later stage of the human progress than that which totemic is characteristic".[1] So in Smith's estimation the communion idea of sacrifice is the original purpose.

The union between the deity and man was cemented by smearing the blood of the victim on stones which the deity inhabited, and which later developed into an altar. He was therefore one with them, their help and stay in all situations of life. Moreover, by eating food together man not only had his fellowship with the deity above but he confirmed his union with his fellow tribesmen. This idea is much the same as Gray's contention that the deity actually partook of the sacrificial meal.

Those who hold this theory have considerable trouble explaining how this primitive idea gradually was ramified into the conception connected with sacrifices which were prevalent from the beginning of the historical period among the Hebrews. It is difficult to see such a sacrifice as the whole burnt-offering (ʿolah) being developed from early communion sacrifices. The burnt-offering was wholly given to the deity and men did not partake of it at all. We are led to the conclusion that the idea of communion in sacrifice may have been connected with some of the original sacrifices but we definitely cannot take the absolute position that it was part of every sacrifice.

4. Life - Theory Finally in the study of the origin of sacrifices there is the very complicated theory that sacrifice had for its object, the setting free of life by the pouring out of the blood of the victim and by

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1. Robertson Smith, The Religion of the Semites, p. 138.

the offerer identifying himself with it by the previous laying of his hands upon the victim. "The out-poured blood is received by the god, the flesh is eaten by the offerer; and as both participate, a union is effected between the offerer and his god".[1]

E. O. James in his book the Origins of Sacrifice believes that there is one single fundamental principle in the offering of sacrifices.

> The fundamental principle is the same; the giving of life to promote or preserve life, death being merely a means of liberating vitality ... In all the manifold variations of the ritual the underlying significance consists in the setting free of life for one or more of the following reasons: (a) to augment the power of the god or spirit approached to enable him to perform his beneficent functions on earth; (b) to meet the forces of death and destination by a fresh outpouring of vital potency and so to strengthen the worshipper against malign influences and to "cover" or "wipe out" transgressions; (c) to establish or re-establish a bond of union or covenant with the benevolent powers in order to maintain a vital relationship between the worshipper and so to gain free communication between the natural and supernatural order.[2]

James' "Life-Theory" includes the idea of the bond of communion being brought about by the sharing of food by the worshipper and the deity. However, it is presumptuous to say that sacrifices originally had the purpose of "wiping out" transgressions, as it presupposes the sin and wrong-doing in the childhood of the race. Yet the idea of life being liberated must be recognized as an important part of the atoning sacrifices of Israel.

The position of other scholars in this study of the origin of sacrifices could be considered but the four theories, (gift, homage, communion and life) which have been dealt with, give an inclusive outline of the majority of scholars. This thesis is not a critical analysis nor an evaluation of the theories. The scholars have based their contentions on a mass of authentic

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1. W. O. E. Oesterley, Sacrifices in Ancient Israel. p. 19.
2. E. O. James, Origins of Sacrifice, p. 256.

material, but even so it is natural that there are differences of interpretation. The theories have been set down as a frame of reference. It cannot be postulated that one theory is right while another is wrong. There is an element of truth in each one of them.

The foregoing theories have dealt with the origin of sacrifice. Now we must go forward and see how the sacrifices have been moulded by the temperament of the age and by interaction with its environment. Many of the sacrifices are reflections of their times as will be evident when we study the Priestly Code. The origin of some have been obliterated, their purpose uncertain, even though they are continually offered because they are ordered in the Law. In most instances the purpose of each individual sacrifice will fall into one of the four categories which we have just concluded studying.

There is one common factor in the theories which is important to our understanding. It is the "holiness of God". Man approached Yahweh through the medium of sacrifices. The differences between the spiritual and the profane were dissolved by the act of communion. The alienation between the worshipper and the Divine was overcome by the gifts of homage and gratitude, as well as the gifts of propitiation and expiation. The need of strength, vitality and blessing was satisfied by the intrusion of fresh life in the soul of the individual making the offering.

Sacrifices are men's offering unto God, but we may rightly ask the question as to whether the Grace of God was secured by their use. Did God look favourably upon even the sincere use of sacrifice, and did he be-

stow His grace and mercy in return? The answers to these questions will be discussed in the chapter on the attitude of the Prophets and in the chapter on the Priestly Code. However it is interesting to consider an observation by James Muilenburg which states:

> The firm basis of the Old Testament's faith is that God has taken the initiative in behalf of his chosen people. In the practices and rituals of the cult, we observe Israel's response to God who has already made himself known in event and word. The covenental people seek to draw near to their covenant's God through rites and ceremonies. The cult is instituted, created and performed by Israel, although it is under the constant direction and supervision of God. Because the cult is man's work, it is subject to the radical criticism of the Word of God through the prophets.[1]

This statement helps us to keep the various facets of sacrifice in perspective.

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1. James Muilenburg, "The History of the Religion of Israel", an article in The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 1, p.341

CHAPTER II

SACRIFICES IN THE 'J' DOCUMENT

The last word has not been written about the Documentary theory. Already there is postulated that there is at least a J^1 and J^2 author. Our study will not be exhaustive but from it shall be shown the changing and developing manner in which the sacrificial system passed from a simple spontaneous giving to the obligatory injunctions of the Mosaic sacrifices.

The date for this material may be around 1000 B.C. to 900 B.C.[1] Some of the material was written to help preserve the spiritual unity of Israel from the dangers which followed the disruption of the Kingdom at that time. Throughout this narrative is the constant reminder of the relation in which Israel stood to the Lord, the God of Sinai. Yahweh through Abraham had chosen Israel to be his people; he had delivered them from the bondage of Egypt; he re-affirmed his choice of Israel through Moses and then settled them in the land of promise; he protected them from their enemies and then under David made them a nation where 'justice and righteousness was to be given to all people' (II Sam. 8:15). This relationship with Yahweh was the thing which gave Israel significance and set them apart.

Sacrifice is motivated by the people's understanding of the God they worship. Therefore we should preface our examination of sacrifices in the "J" document with a few remarks on the nature of Yahweh. Yahweh is conceived as a free personality who is bound to no place but is able to reveal himself where He will, whether it is in Padan Aram, Palestine or Egypt. He is present by his own free will and chooses the time of his revelation. The sacrifice of the worshipper is not the means by which he draws the attention

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1. W. F. Albright, From Stone Age to Christianity, p. 90.

of Yahweh or even attracts His presence. It is the means by which the worshipper acknowledges a revelation which has been of God's free grace. It is the response which prompts gratitude in the human heart.

Yahweh is spiritual in the sense that His relation to the world of nature is that of a free personality. By this is meant that He always stands behind the phenomena of nature and is never contained within it. He sends pestilences (Ex. 9:8) (II Sam. 24:15) and causes droughts. He was able to reveal himself to the patriarchs without the use of such powers but the nature-phenomena relation to Yahweh was awe-inspiring to the early Hebrews. Also, in an age which had no clear doctrine of God's relation to the world, it is understandable that men, who still felt their life strangely akin to the natural world around them, could look for divine revelation in the natural objects.

"J" and "E" differ in degree as to the place to make sacrifice but both writers are at one in the way in which they make the sacrifice. It is not a sacrifice in the sense of being a means by which God's anger may be propitiated or by which He who has withdrawn Himself from His people, may be brought back.[1] It is predominantly an acknowledgment on the part of the worshipper of the grace God has bestowed upon him. "J" is sounding the notes of the Homage-Sacrifice Theory, which as an act of worship is giving without thought of gain or favour.

"J" and "E" both imply the necessity of every true worshipper of God giving his individual allegiance to Yahweh. Abraham separates himself

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1.A.C. Welch, Religion of Israel, p.18

from home and kin and commits himself to One whom he makes Lord of his life. Jacob before his pilgrimage to Bethel where God has told him to go and make an altar and worship him, buries all the heathen emblems and gods under the oak at Shechem. (Gen. 35:4) Welch points out that "the sense of being in the power of one will, which means well by them, is as deliverance rather than a duty .... It has unified their moral life to realize that there is One above all who has a purpose with them".[1] Thus "J" and "E" stress the sincerity of heart in the offering of sacrifices, making the ethical element clear and strong.

More specifically in the "J" document the author has brought together mythical stories in an unexcelled way, but not in an unholy way for he seemed to be able to capture and present a consistent understanding of Yahweh. He surmised and pondered the past, using the traditional stories to express eternal truths about God. Pfeiffer describes this writing as being "with epic scope and dramatic intensity".[2] Like most writers the author chooses his material with a preference in mind. "J" saw Yahweh's hand at work in the affairs of men shaping them to the Divine Plan. Yahweh is the God of Israel, and Israel the people of Yahweh. The glorious destiny of the people is the unfolding of the providential plan, the fulfilment of the divine promises to Abraham.

Unlike the writer of "E", the author of "J" has chosen to recognize sacrifice as something which existed before Israel. He does not regard sacrifice as a rite peculiar to Israel for he was able to accept traditions which described Cain, Abel and Noah as presenting offerings. This fact does not mean that "J" wishes to condone them. He is merely stating their existence.

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1. A. C. Welch, Religion of Israel, p.32
2. R.H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament, p.14

While he tells of Abraham building altars, he is accustomed to add that the patriarch called upon the name of Yahweh. (Gen.21:23; 12:8; 13:4).[1] Evidently it was not the sacrifice but the calling on the name of Yahweh which seemed to him to be the significant Israelite element in the act of worship. One can deduce that "J" believed that the relation between Yahweh and his worshipper was one that could continue without sacrifice. Take, for instance, the story of Joseph, which is one primarily concerned with the great truth of divine providence. It is wholly silent as to sacrifice, giving the impression that the people of this period might have offered none. Yet no one can say that the life in Egypt in the time of Joseph, even though it was devoid of sacrifice was destitute of the presence of God. God revealed himself to Joseph there. His providence protected and guided the people there. Yet the sons of Jacob according to "J" have never seen an Israelite altar; but are nevertheless still claimed by Jacob for faith and are blessed by him.[2] (Gen. 48:5). Sacrifice is recognized by "J" but is relegated to a subordinate position in worship. Prayer for him could just as easily take the place of animal sacrifice.

"J" in his religious thoughts would appear to be more advanced than "E" although authorities place the "J" document prior to the writing of the "E" document. Both were written in the same stage of history.[3] The style of both corresponds with that found in the early or middle monarchy. "J" is a native of Judah and "E" comes from the North.

There is not agreement as to which is the oldest form of sacrifice in the Old Testament. Although some writers believe that the oldest sacrifice recorded in the Old Testament may have been a wave offering (Deut. 24:19, Lev.

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1. R.H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament, p.150
2. A. C. Welch, Religion of Israel, pp., 16, 17
3. W. O. E. Oesterly and T. H. Robinson, Introduction to the Old Testament p.55.

19:9) in which the first sheaf of the harvest was presented to the god of the harvest, the sacrifice made by Cain and Abel in Gen. 4 is generally regarded as being the earliest sacrifice, representing the most primitive type of sacrifice offered to Yahweh.[1] "And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground, an offering unto the Lord, and Abel, he also brought the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof and the Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering". (Gen.4:3,4)

It was a very simple sacrifice not requiring the use of fire, nor being upon an altar, nor involving the shedding of blood. Ottley tells us that the use of fire as a way of consuming the sacrifice seems to have been introduced at a comparatively later stage in the evolution of Semitic sacrifices.[2] Apparently Cain and Abel made the offering spontaneously out of thanksgiving which was created in their hearts from their faith and experience. This offering was described by the oldest word for sacrifice in the Hebrew which is "Minchah". It is curious that this word "Minchah" which later came to mean a cake, originally meant an offering. Dr. William Magee, Archbishop of Dublin, holds that the true and original meaning is that of an offering presented to a superior being. In its earliest Old Testament usage it was used both for that which was killed and that which was not. The example of this is the fruit from Cain and the lamb from Abel.[3] Oesterley makes the observation that in the post exilic period "Minchah" became restricted to oblations of flour and oil, or from cakes made of these. Scriptural evidence for this can be obtained from Psalm 141.

Other details about these early sacrifices are missing except for the fact that Abel's was accepted and Cain's was rejected. Either "J" had a

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1. S. H. Hooke, The Origin of Early Ritual, p.51
2. R. L. Ottley, Aspects of the Old Testament, p.234
3. A. F. Scott, Offering and Sacrifice, p.3.

reason for omitting all details or actually this was a very primitive sacrifice with which there was no connection with any ritualistic practices or forms. Was this a "J" bias against Canaan? This could be a straightforward gift sacrifice from the heart, a giving from one's own possessions of something of real value to the deity. The animals of the flock and the fruit of the ground certainly were the means to the livelihood of the primitive man. It is interesting to compare the simplicity of this sacrifice with the more complex sacrifices of other Semitic people who had weird beliefs about the supernatural powers of the deities which they worshipped.

For the nomads, the most important requisite was to possess flocks and herds. They conceived in their belief a faith in a fertility-deity to whom an offering or tribute was given so that he might increase the number of the herds. This sacrifice was in fact the offering of the first born. It is probable at the same time that they made offerings of the figs and dates grown in the desert. The reason for offering these would also correspond to the one for the offering of the first born of the animals.[1] This could provide an explanation for the offerings given by Cain and Abel, especially when evidence from later periods would indicate that all sacrifices were those of flock and herd.

But why was Cain's sacrifice not acceptable unto the Lord? In spite of Heb. 4:11, we can only make suppositions. Perhaps as A. Simpson Cuthbert in his exegetical work on Genesis in the Interpreter's Bible suggests the omission by "J" of any reason was a "piece of polemic against the peasant custom of bringing the fruit of the ground as an offering to the Lord instead of the time-honoured offering of an animal".[2]

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1. W. O. E. Oesterley, Sacrifices of Ancient Israel, pp., 97-98,
2. A. Simpson Cuthbert, Exegesis on "Genesis", Interpreter's Bible, vol. I, p.518.

"J" gives us a very scanty sketch of many centuries of time and so the next sacrifice described is that of Noah giving burnt-offerings as the occupants of the Ark disembarked after they had been saved from the flood by the mercy of the Lord (Gen. 8:20,21.). "Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and took every clean animal and every clean bird and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And when the Lord smelled the pleasing odor, the Lord said in His heart, 'I will never again curse the ground because of man'". Here we have a different sacrifice from that of Cain and Abel. Now for the first time there is an altar, a fire, the animals and birds are designated clean and there is introduced the idea that the Lord partook of the offering. All these things combined to make the Burnt-Offering which later became one of the most important of all the Old Testament sacrifices. The principal act of public worship in the days of the second temple was the daily or continual burnt-offering. (Ex. 29:29; Numbers 28). However the burnt-offering referred to by "J" was much simpler in meaning and in ritual practice than that referred to by "P" which is described in detail in Lev. 1.

The early burnt offering was designated in Hebrew as simply "ôlah" but in later times it is nearly always associated with zebachim, the meal-offering, or shelamin, the peace-offering. In other words it was an offering that was accompanied by a sacrificial meal. "ôlah" (burnt on the altar in its entirety) as a word, comes from the root meaning to "go up" in reference either to that which goes up on the altar or to the ascending smoke. Throughout the history of Israel's sacrificial system the significance of the burnt-offering could be said to vary according to the situation.

> Its object was to secure protection against threatened danger. success in hazardous conflict, deliverance from the sore calamity and, if in some instances, it has an appearance of a thankoffering

> after deliverance, the dominant thought may still have been that security was sought against a recurrence of the judgment. Further, it is clear that the idea was to ensure safety by performing an act, which was acceptable to God and thus dispose Him to maintain the worshipped cause. The intention was not invariably to propitiate God in the sense of altering His attitude from hostility to clemency . . . but they were always propitiary in the secondary sense that they were designed to prevent God from changing His attitude of clemency into an attitude of hostility.[1]

With these thoughts in mind, Noah's sacrifice can easily be placed although Matthews doubts whether there are any actual burnt offerings in the Nomadic age. He thinks it is unlikely that a nomad ever felt constrained to provide a holocaust so foreign to his way of life, which was centered on the sacred meal.[2] First of all, there seems to be a thank-offering after the deliverance of Noah and his family. This would be a natural spontaneous act and of course could be propitiatory as well, in the secondary sense that Noah did wish to do that which was pleasing to God, thus preventing Him from changing His merciful attitude. James Muilenburg carries this even further when he writes that sacrifice was expiatory, "through it, the curse of God on the soil was expiated, His anger appeased".[3] This view is not generally held, although from verse 21, it has a case. God, it would appear, was warmly disposed toward Noah. He alone had found grace in the eyes of Yahweh, (Gen. 6, 7, 8.) and having discovered how great this grace was, he acknowledged it in his offering. Noah did not offer it for the sin of man, as does the idea of expiation infer.

What does the Bible mean by the phrase "And the Lord smelled the sweet savour", and how are we to understand the problem posed? While a strictly literal view may have had some currency in Israel, there is no evidence that it was ever widely held. Among the early Semitic tribes, some of

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1. W. P. Paterson, Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible
2. I. G. Matthews, Religious Pilgrimage of Israel, p.88
3. James Muilenburg, "The History of the Religion of Israel" article in The Interpreter's Bible

the gifts were regarded as being most directly and materially accepted by their deities for their own sensuous enjoyment.[1] This early expression, no doubt endured long after the belief in relation to Yahweh was abandoned. Peake writes that the phrase is not an example of "J"s" anthropomorphism:

> It is a technical term from the ritual vocabulary to express the acceptance of a sacrifice. It is found in the Babylonian deluge story 'the gods inhaled the fragrant savour, in 'P' which avoids anthropomorphism and even in the New Testament.[2]

In Gen. 12:7, we read that Abraham built himself an altar after the Lord had appeared unto him and said "To your descendants I will give this land (Canaan)." No sacrifice is mentioned, but undoubtedly, one would have been made to acknowledge the grace God had bestowed upon him. The exegesis in the Interpreter's Bible draws a conclusion that Abraham built an altar to draw nearer to God.[3] Thus the idea of communion and sacrifice is not out of the question.

It is difficult for us to understand the significance intended in the strange rite of Gen. 15: 9-17 which occurred on the day of the Great Covenant which the Lord made with Abraham. The Lord commanded Abraham to bring a three-year old heifer, a three-year old ram, a turtle-dove and a young pigeon, which were all cut in two, except the birds.[4] When the sun went down a smoking fire pot, and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. First of all we have a split decision as to which document we are to attribute this covenant sacrifice. Oesterly and Robinson believe that "J" is the author as does W. P. Paterson. The Interpreter's

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1. A.C. Welch, Religion of Israel, p. 246
2. A. S. Peake, Commentary on Genesis, p.144.
3. G.A.Barrois, Interpreter's Bible, Gen.12:6-8, p 144.
4. A.R.S.Kennedy Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible, Article on "Sacrifice," p.817.

Bible and S. R. Driver believe that "E" is most likely responsible for it, while Pfeiffer and Peake believe that "J" and "E" cannot be separated. Secondly, as to the meaning, there is a difference of opinion. Welch, as could be expected, takes the gift conception, believing it should be construed as a means by which God assures Abraham of His mercy.[1] He points out that this rite seems to have had a very different meaning originally and its present position in the Bible seems to have been deliberately chosen. Peake writes that this rite was no mere piece of symbolism but has touched the mind below the level of consciousness. Robertson Smith points out that originally the victims were divided and both parties took their share. When the victims ceased to be eaten, the parties stood between the portions to symbolize that they were taken into the mystical life of the victim.[2] Therefore as Robertson Smith indicates, we see something of a communion sacrifice in this mysterious rite, as well as a possible tribute.

Now we come to a unique sacrifice which is first noted in "J", the Mosaic Passover in Exodus 12:21-28. This is perhaps the best known of all sacrifices. It should be noted that this sacrifice is decidedly different than the later one in the days of the Jewish Temple, when the victim had to be slain at the Temple, its blood tossed down at the base of the altar and its fat and other specified parts had to be burned on the altar. It would be naive to think that this ordeal was performed on the night of the "Exodus" for the first and only time or for the precise reason assigned to it in the story.

> The real historical value of the story lies in its witness to the existence of a long continued custom or ritual of indefinite antiquity, but still practised when the story first took shape and form; and the shape and form of the story may be a great deal more ancient than the earliest Literary source in which it has come to us.[3]

1. A. C. Welch, Religion of Israel, p.22
2. A. S. Peake, Peake's Commentary, p.150
3. Buchanan Gray, Sacrifices in the Old Testament p.356

Oesterley makes the point that the Passover (Pesach) dates back to the Nomadic period because the Passover festival ordinance presupposes only cattle-breeding. In Exodus 12:21 it is clearly assumed that the Passover lamb was well known. It is thought that Exodus 4:23 also bears reference to the Passover.[1] But the various accounts of the festival are so overlaid with later ideas, it is difficult to decide what its original idea or purpose really was. Barton has an interesting theory that the feast was a primitive Semitic festival of the yearning time,at which some of the gifts of the deity of fertility were returned to him in the form of sacrifices.[2] It is possible that the offering of the yearning time consisted of the first born of men as well. Later it was considered right to substitute a lamb for the first born of man, as the significant point of the sacrifice of Isaac will bear witness. Wellhaussen believes also that it was the sacrifice of the first born as illustrated by Abel's sacrifice. The Passover is the shepherd's offering, given in thankful recognition that the fruitlessness is from Yahweh.[3] The offering of the first born is closely related to the Passover.

> You shall set apart to the Lord all that first opens the womb, all the firstlings of your cattle that are male shall be the Lord's. Every firstling of an ass, you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it, you shall break its neck. Every first born of man among your sons, you shall redeem.

This custom can explain the use of the plague by which the first born of the Egyptians were smitten. Because Pharaoh prevents the offering which is due, Yahweh takes the first born of Egypt. ("J" Exodus 3:18). "D" holds the slaying of the Egyptians as the reason for offering the first born when

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1. W. O. E. Oesterley, Sacrifices in Ancient Israel, p.100
2. A. P. Barton, A Sketch of Semitic Origins, pp., 108-111
3. J. Wellhaussen, Prolegomena, pp., 22-117

actually it is a part of the feast at which time the Exodus occurred. "P" is no longer based on the fact that Yahweh slew the first born of the Egyptians but that was instituted before the Exodus so that the first born of Israel might be saved.

From earlier days the facts stand out that the Passover was originally connected with the spring equinox and that it was a sacrifice, although many of the Protestant Theologians after the Reformation were hesitant to think so.[1] As a sacrifice, it is more than an offering of the first born, it has a prominent, peculiar side, for a blood offering as in Exodus 12:21-28 can hardly have any other meaning. The lintel and the two doorposts of each house in which the Israelites were dwelling were to be sprinkled with blood in order that Yahweh might, by this sign, distinguish the houses of His own people from those of the Egyptians and in this way be secured against the killing of the first-born of a Hebrew family by error. The blood of the lamb was applied with a bunch of hyssop from out of a basin. (Hyssop was also used for other acts of purification as can be seen in Lev. 14:4, and Num. 19:6) Nothing is directly said in this account of the victim being eaten although this is perhaps suggested by the Hebrew term for "sacrifice" used in Exodus 12:27. The blood ritual, which Gray suggests may go back to a primitive custom whereby doors were re-enforced against an unwelcome visitor by the application of blood, salt-plants of a special kind, has apparently an apotropaic purpose[2] By this we mean that it certainly did not aim at communion but was practised to keep the almighty power at some distance. There are furthermore, no grounds for regarding the rite as being expiatory. It was not like the blood applied to the temple in Ezekiel's ritual which was thought to suck out the

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1. Buchanan Gray, Sacrifice in the Old Testament, p. 312
2. Buchanan Gray, Sacrifice in the Old Testament, p 363

sin of the house. (Ezekiel 45:18). Since "J" does not stress the sacramental meal with respect to the Passover, we will wait until a discussion of the "P" doctrine to bring out the fact that this aspect of it is of no less importance and no less primitive. It ranks with the "shelamin" or peace-offering which was a means of establishing or renewing the covenant with God and with one another.

The Yahwistic ritual law is found in Exodus 34:10-26 and it formed the original kernel around which the Covenant Code gradually grew. Later the "J" document was combined with "E". The ten commandments is probably a later edition. This section is what is left of the so-called "ritual decalogue". It is contended by more recent scholars that this ritual decalogue is much older than the ethical covenant decalogue through Deuteronomy, although the "J" decalogue was re-edited possibly by the Redactor about 550 B.c.[1] The ritual laws throughout the history of civilization are always prior to the civil laws. Deuteronomy is not only dependent on the old decalogue, but is occasionally quoted verbatim. (e.g. Deut. 14:21). Of course, "D" suppressed entirely the ancient barbaric rite of Canaan, namely the sacrifice of the human first-born. Although the terminology of the laws in Exodus 20, is unmistakably more archaic than that of the parallel in Exodus 34, it is the prevalent opinion of the critics that the latter is an integral part of the "J" document (not later than 850 B.C.) and that Exodus 23 is the redactional copy thereof.[2]

Since the "J" document is part of the law of the Covenant, it might be better for clarity's sake to interpret a few remarks concerning the

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1. . R. H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament, p.222
2. . R. H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament, p.224

Covenant. By the covenant-election of Israel by Yahweh, responsibility and obedience were interpreted as the proper human response to the grace of God, as shown in His saving acts, and election promises. Israel conceived the law, not as a penalty but as a gift of God, in which security and justice could be found. It was believed that the law was God's special gift which would not be dealt with lightly, as it was not a natural creation. The law of the Covenant meant that the people had an association with the divine King, which was prior to political organization. The earthly king could only administer it as he was subject to it. Finally the Covenant law was given to the nation as a whole, yet within the nation every man was bound in will to God, by the words "Thou shalt". The God of the Covenant would hearken unto the beseeching of the most humble for He had signified each one with this personal address.[1] Thus, the people of Israel were willing to accept the strict ritual decalogue as their guiding authority, so necessary in the long struggle between Baal and Yahweh.

Matthews has written a very descriptive account of the Ritual Decalogue.

> Like the people themselves, this law was composite. Its roots ran back into the pre-Mosaic tribalism; it was dominated by the spirit of the desert covenant; and while it denounced the cruder Baal practices, it re-interpreted others and incorporated them into Yahweh worship. By its spirit of compromise and its inclusiveness, it set the pattern of later legislation in both the south and the north. While it was brief, and non-ethical, it revealed the discriminating judgment of the leaders, who said the clash of religious ideals, were the advocates of the higher levels in worship. It was prophetic of the further elimination of the primitive and the acceptance of the mere universal in the onward march of revelation. In it were all joys of a credo, the satisfactions of a definite pattern in worship. It was the measure of religion among the common people of Judah and might well be termed the 'Magna Carta of Old Testament religion'.[2]

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1. G. Ernest Wright, The Faith of Israel, article in The Interpreter's Bible, pp., 354-356.
2. I. G. Matthews, The Religious Pilgrimage of Israel, p.118

Now, as we deal specifically with the content of the Ritual Decalogue, we see from the available material, that the oldest form may be reconstructed as follows:

I. The Festivals

(1) Six days thou shalt do thy work, but the seventh day thou shalt desist; (Exodus 34:21.) (Exodus 23:21E; Deut.5:12-15)

(2) The Feast of Unleavened Bread shalt thou keep at the time appointed in the month of Abib: Exodus 34:18J. (Exodus 23:15 in part E; Deut. 16:3-8; Lev. 23:6-8)

(3) And the Feast of Harvest, the first fruits of thy labours; Exodus 34:22. (Ex.23:16E; Deut. 16:9-12; Lev. 23:15-20; Num.29:12-38).

(4) And the Feast of Ingathering at the exit of the year; Ex. 34:22. (Ex. 23:16E ; Deut. 16:13-15; Lev. 23:34-36,39,43; Num.29:12-38)

(5) Three times in the year shall all thy males see the faces of the Lord (not Jehovah, but ha'-adon) Ex. 34:23-24. (Exodus 23:17; Deut. 16:16; Exodus 23:14).

II. Sacrifices and Offerings

(6) The first born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me, thus shalt thou do to thine ox, thy sheep; Exodus 34:19-20. (Exodus 22:29-30; Deut. 15:19-23; Exodus 13:2,11-16; Num.18:15).

(7) Thou shalt not sacrifice with leavened bread, the blood of my sacrifice; Exodus 34:25. (Exodus 23:18; Deut.16:3; Lev. 2:11, 6, 16).

(8) Neither shall there remain all night the fat of my feast until morning; Exodus 34:25. (Exodus 23:18; Deut. 16:4; Exodus 12:10; Num.9:12).

(9) The first of the first-fruits of thy ground shalt thou bring into the house of thy God; Ex. 34:26. (Exodus 23: 19; Deut. 14:22, 18, 4; Deut. 26:1-11; Lev. 23: 10-20; Lev. 2:14-16; Num. 15: 17-21, 13-18).

(10) Thou shalt not boil a kid in its mother's milk; Exodus 34:26. (Exodus 23:19; Deut. 14:21).[1]

From this it is possible to see what Matthews meant when he said that Ritual Decalogue re-interpreted and incorporated some of the Canaanite agricultural festivals and sacrifices. The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Maccôth) in the "J" document, and in Deut. as well, takes a more important place than the Passover. There are no instructions here as to the actual activities of any of the feasts. Further details will be studied when we come to the "P" document. It is known, however, that it was celebrated at the beginning of the barley harvest, being derived from the Canaanite Sun festival at the same occasion. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to indicate precisely what sacrifices were even offered at their great festivals in the pre-exilic times, for our sources have been so largely influenced and worked over in the interests of the later developed sacrificial system. The feast of the Harvest (qāçîr) was seven weeks after the feast of the Unleavened Bread, when the wheat harvest was just commencing. The Feast of Ingathering (asiph) was the great celebration of thanksgiving, when the fruits of the year had been gathered and especially the harvest of the vineyard. It lasted for a whole week with a Sabbath at the beginning and one at the end.[2] "Three times in the year shall all males appear before the Lord God",[3] is a command to all men to appear before

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1. R. H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 221
2. Nathaniel Micklem, Exegesis of "Leviticus" in The Interpreter's Bible, p.115.
3. Exodus 34:23.

the altar of the Lord, with gifts for the sacrificial festivals. The keeping of the festivals were thus a mandate.

The sacred festivals were primarily occasions of rejoicing, treated as a part of religion. Through the feasts the people acknowledged the sovereignty of Yahweh and they promised to love him. In the nomadic history, man bases his conceptions of the relationship between himself and a supernatural being, on that which exists between himself and his fellowmen. He knows by human experience that requests stand a better chance of being granted, if accompanied by a gift. So he applies this logic to his relationship with a deity. This idea is related to another idea in Canaan, that the deity is the Lord of the land like a human land-proprietor, to whom dues were expected to be paid. Thus the gift to the god which had at one time the single purpose of inducing him to grant a request became also a tribute to him. Exodus 34:25-26 decrees that the first-fruits of the land must be brought unto the house of the Lord. This is a practice of heritage made obligatory. Leavened bread must not accompany a sacrifice, being regarded as unsuitable, because it was unknown in primitive times, and the God of Israel did not look with favour on innovations. The sacrifice referred to is the lamb eaten at the Paasover, which was to be strictly as a blood sacrifice. The injunction "Thou shalt not boil a kid in its mother's milk" is also a categorical rejection, which developed into a primary principle in Jewish dietary laws. It shows that while certain Canaanite practices were assimilated in order to serve the Israelite revelation, others were rejected outright.[1]

The sacrificial system is described in this chapter out of the material compiled by "J", the story-telling theologian. It seems as if sacrifice begins as a free-will act of homage and is then reinforced by law

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1. J. C. Rylaardsdam, Exegesis on "Exodus", Interpreter's Bible, p. 1014.

or obligation. The motive of gratitude is changed under Canaanite influence to the motive of giving because God demands and expects returns from the land that belongs to him. This material deals with the very early sacrifices and we find the suggestion that prayer would be a more acceptable offering to God. This idea of course is suppressed as the law and obligation becomes more established. Upon the Ritual Decalogue can be seen the influence of Canaanite agricultural festivals and sacrifices.

CHAPTER III

THE "E" DOCUMENT AND SACRIFICE

There are many similarities between "J" and "E", (e.g., Exodus 34: 10-26 and Exodus 23: 14-19) as we saw in the previous chapter. But we should keep some of the distinctions in mind. "J" speaks of sacrifices almost indifferently and does not stress them in their relationship to the national life of Israel. Even in the ritual code (Exodus 34: 10-26) there is no detail or explanation, but just a summary of the terms of the historical covenant. "J", we suggested, was ahead of the teaching of the reforming prophets in preferring prayer to sacrifice as a means of communion with God, which perhaps accounts for his omission of the fascinating story of the sacrifice of Isaac. The writer of the Yahwistic material wrote with the purpose of showing that Israel progressed and prospered under its God. However, if you want to see a clearer picture of the religious history of the Israelites, we must turn to the contemporary writer of "J" (was he a contemporary?) the Elohistic writer, who is so-called because of his use of Elohim in preference to Yahweh, which is due to a vernacular usage by the priests of Bethel and other sanctuaries.

There is no valid reason for doubting that the author of "E" knew the "J" document, since it clearly corrected the outspoken objectivity and crass humor of the earlier document.[1] However, "E" used independently the Canaanitic sanctuary-legends and the Israelite tradition circulating orally in North Israel. Similar to "J" in subject, and in his pride of national achievement and in assurance of the glorious future of his nation under the protection of God, "E" nevertheless reflects a more advanced civilization, a more refined environment, a more thoughtful age. The love of ritual

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1. R. H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament, p.171.

characteristic of a later age in the post-exilic period is seen in its embryo form in the "E" document.

Since the interest in ritual in "E" is so pervasive, we may conclude that its author was a priest presumably at Bethel. "E" explains in mythical terms, why the eating of the sciatic muscle was forbidden (Gen.32:32). Its priestly background appears in reference to temples, which exacted tithes (Gen. 28:22). Stone pillars not mentioned in "J", on which libations of oil were poured are stressed (Gen.28:18, Gen.38:14). Particularly is the priestly interest seen in the emphasis of the priestly functions of Moses. The distinction between Moses and the ordinary mortals, totally foreign in "J", but heightened in "D" and "P", has far-reaching effects in "E". Carefully, the Elohistic writer eliminated from his story, all physical appearances of the Deity to mortals, except to Moses alone. He discards the anthropomorphic apparition of God to the Patriarchs, current in the oral tradition and "J", because they would minimize the uniqueness of Moses. When possible, the Deity reveals himself to men other than Moses in dreams and visions as a rule in the night time (Gen.15:1; Gen. 20:3; Gen. 28:12; Gen. 3:11; Gen. 46:2; Num. 22:9); to mortals during their waking hours, He made use of an angel speaking from Heaven (Gen. 21:17; Gen. 22:11). However to Moses, comes the command of God directly and singularly. "E" distinguishes Moses, further, from other men, by making him alone a miracle-worker. With his wonderful rod, Moses produced the curses instantly before Pharaoh. This exaltation of Moses lends force to the importance of the covenant and laws, which "E" attributes to Moses.

Probably the most captivating study of sacrifice in this document is the offering made by Abraham of his beloved son, Isaac, in the land of Moriah (Gen. 22). This is the story of a great soul, who walked in harmony and trust with God during a crude age. He loved Isaac more than anything else, with one exception, which was his God. As he looked around him in Canaan, he could see men worshipping heathen deities willingly, with great cost and heartache for human sacrifice was an age-old custom among the Canaanites. How could he show how much his God meant to him? Only by being willing to go as far as they did. In spite of the bonds of human love he could only hear the inward voice asking why he would not show his great love for God and as the thought pressed upon his conscience, he thought that it was the voice of God. So Abraham, out of a sense of devotion, was willing to offer Isaac as a burnt offering, an ʿOlah, upon an altar. Then at the very last moment God speaks in loving mercy and a ram is provided.[1] Buchanan Gray points out that this is one sacrifice that could not in any way have a propitiatory aspect, because of the perfect oneness between the heart of God and the heart of Abraham. Gray interprets this as God actually asking Abraham for the sacrifice to test his faith and Abraham in response, willing to go all the way and give Isaac, his son, as a gift.[2]

The climax of this sacrifice is not in the laying of Isaac upon the altar, but the word from God, that Isaac shall not be sacrificed. It is for that reason, that this moving story has been conceived as the divine rejection of human sacrifice. It was God's way of speaking a great message through history, negating an obnoxious,heathenistic practice. Up to this time, human sacrifice was believed to have been acceptable; the very offering of Isaac,

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1. C. A Simpson, **Exegesis of Genesis**, Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 1, p. 642.
2. Buchanan Gray, Sacrifices in the Old Testament, p.92

by Abraham, would support this view. The case of Jephthah's daughter shows the possibility that even later among some early Israelites, such sacrifice was made from quite an honourable motive, namely a vow or promise. However, except for tragic relapses, the Hebrews were controlled by the highest prophetic teachings as God revealed himself to His people. Further, a point well worth considering is that in the thought of that time, when all public activity was controlled by religious motives, people saw "sacrifice" where we do not see it. Such tragedies as the destruction of Achan and his family (Joshua 7), Agag being hewed to pieces by Samuel (I Samuel 15: 32), may be classed as judicial procedures exercised according to the tribal ideas of that time, but to the ancients there is in them a sacrificial and propitiatory element. The higher stage of civilization did not completely displace the lower stages. It was a gradual process in keeping with the fuller revelation of God. [1] As has been inferred, "E", because of his priestly traditions, tends to mention sacred places, Bamoth and other sanctuaries, Gezer, Gilgal and Bethel, and sacred pillars, Mezzebah. In Canaan, and among the early Hebrews, the land was dotted with shrines made sacred because some natural object had laid its spell upon imagination and created a sense of the supernatural, some huge old oak, a cave, a rock, or a well. In Gen. 28:18, we have the story of Jacob, arising from a dream, in which God reaffirmed the covenant of Abraham, that the seed of Jacob will be as the dust of the earth. God's presence was very real to him and so spontaneously he took the stone that served as his pillow, and set it up for a pillar. He then poured oil on it. The stone was to him sacred as God dwelt therein. Robertson Smith claims that in addition to the

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1 W. G. Jordan, "Religion of Israel" article in Peake's Commentary, p. 83

anointing of the sacred pillar (Mazzébah), blood was poured out at this base for the deity's benefit, so that when the lengthwise altar came into greater use, on which was placed the victim, the altar was conceived as being the dwelling place of the deity.[1] The fact that libations of the same kind were applied to both the sacred pillar and the altar, makes it clear that the "altar is a differentiated form of the primitive rude stone." "Furthermore", Smith states, "the great mass of Hebrews certainly treated Mazzebah as a sort of idol or embodiment of the Divine presence."

The pouring of oil by Jacob here and in Gen. 35: 14, cannot be considered wholly as a libation. May we surmise that the oil made of the fat of animals was used for smearing such sacred stones in the earliest times. This offering may be regarded in some sense as a gift.[2] Oil was regarded, according to the Mishnah, as in the category of first-fruits, along with wheat, barley, vines, fig trees, pomegranates and honey.[3] However the mention of drink-offering in Gen. 35: 14, suggests a water libation might have been offered. Water libations, it is believed, are the nomadic equivalent to the Canaanite custom of using wine for libation. As a libation, it was believed in the early Semitic days, that the liquid was absorbed mysteriously by the deity. Just as water poured on graves of the departed was believed to refresh them, so the deity was thought to look upon water as an acceptable offering. Water was considered a life-giving element.[4]

In Genesis 28, verses 20 to 22, we have an excellent example of a

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1. Robertson Smith, Religion of the Semites, p.203
2. W. O. E. Oesterley, Sacrifices in the Old Testament, p. 99
3. Buchanan Gray, Sacrifices of the Old Testament, p. 25
4. W. O. E. Oesterley, Sacrifice in Ancient Israel, p. 108

vow-offering "Jacob made a vow, saying, 'If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God, and this stone which I have set up for a pillar shall be God's house; and all that Thou givest me, I will give a tenth to Thee.'" Here is an excellent example of a vow-offering, which has a single purpose of inducing the deity to grant a request. Jacob is trying to persuade God to make a bargain by promising to offer great things in return. If God will save his life and also make him prosperous, then will he give back to God a tenth of what God had given him. This certainly is a cheap prayer, yet one in keeping with the nomadic idea of Yahweh as being in human likeness, able to make individual bargains, just as did Jacob and Laban. Prayer seems to be implicit with the vow-offering. Heiler writes:

> Prayer was a grand thing, self-contained and originally quite independent of sacrifice and continues to be, or when, in a moment of overwhelming spiritual excitement, a cry for help or gratitude rises up to God. But when the sensation of distress or fear takes the place of a fervent wish and the ardours of hope, then there arises in the mind of man the thought that the supernatural power, who thinks and feels like man himself, may be won over by a gift.[1]

This thought, no doubt envisages correctly the mind of man even in his primitive consciousness. However, with the early Israelite who had advanced at least some of the way, in the path of spiritual religion, there was some higher aspiration glowing in the heart of Yahweh's devotees, even though they still continued with the utilitarian purpose of gift-offering. It is noteworthy that what Jacob promises on condition, is a tithe of ten percent, which is not defined until Deut. 14:23-27. Although the 22nd verse is attributed to "E", it is believed to be a later addition.

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1. W. O. E. Oesterley, Sacrifices of Ancient Israel, p. 133

The gifts that Jacob promised, when the request which had been made was granted, came very close to thankofferings. In Gen. 46: 1, "E", describes Jacob as offering sacrifices as a thanksgiving for having been brought safely on his journey as far as Beersheba. Although the term used is a general one (Zebach), the thought of thanksgiving is evidently implied.

Now, we turn to Moses, whom we have explained was exalted by "E". According to Paul Volz, we find the only authoritative source of the real work of Moses in the "E" document.[1] Perhaps this is going too far, for as we have seen, there is much material emanating from "J". Nevertheless, "E" with his priestly interest takes particular care while dealing with Moses and the Mosaic law.

The question is often raised by scholars, as to whether or not the Israelites offered sacrifices to Yahweh in the desert. On reading the prophets alone the answer would be, in all probability, no. Amos in Amos 5: 25 seems to deny categorically that Israel sacrificed in the desert and Jeremiah confirms Amos' position. But in the "E" document, there is a notable witness that sacrifices were offered. In Exodus 18: 12, we read, "Jethro, Moses' father-in-law offered a burnt-offering and sacrifices to God; and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God." The words "before God", which imply the reality of God's presence, are construed by Oesterley to signify that Jethro's offerings were communion-sacrifices. "Eating before Yahweh' implies eating with Him, for it is not to be supposed that the intentions were to eat in His Presence, merely to be watched by Him".[2]

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1. James Muilenburg, "The History of the Religion of Israel," The Interpreter's Bible, p 303.
2. W. O. E. Oesterley, Sacrifices of Ancient Israel, p 173

In Exodus 24: 5-8, there is a very significant and unique sacrifice. An altar was built by Moses, on which burnt-offerings and peace-offerings were offered by the young men of Israel, who were as a matter-of-course, entrusted with the laborious work of the slaying, preparing and offering of the sacrifices. Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and the other half of the blood, he threw against the altar. After reading the Book of the Covenant he took the blood and threw it upon the people, saying, "Behold the blood of the Covenant, which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words." Then they "beheld God and ate and drank." (vs.7). This is the most notable association of Moses with sacrifice in the early narratives, the ratification of the Covenant at Sinai. Since the Covenant was an agreement between God and Israel, a blood-covenant sacrifice was deemed necessary to seal it, just as a covenant feast sealed an agreement between two men as in II Sam. 3:20-21. Moses threw God's share of the blood on the altar, the symbol of His Presence, so that He could partake. The people were sprinkled with it, so that through the common medium, a fellowship was established. Thus Moses personally performed what was in any case, the most conspicuous, and according to later Temple standards, at least, the peculiarly priestly part of the ritual. None but a priest could ever manipulate the blood in applying it to the altar. Thus, Moses must have been considered a priest, as there is no indication that he might not have done the same on other unique or ordinary occasions.

The peace-offering "zebhah shelamim", is a form of sacrifice offered at a great festive occasion in the life of the nation, community, and even the family. It had a vertical and horizontal scope, as it was

offered to keep alive the sense of dependency on God for protection and the natural blessings of life, as well as promoting the solidarity of the people. The peace and the burnt-offerings (ʿolah) were the two earliest bloody sacrifices, although the actual origin of the former is obscure. Originally the blood was once no doubt actually consumed by partakers.[1]

The sacred meal was the climax of the ritual, for all who were assembled, the deity, priests, and people entered into the communion. Matthews excellently describes this great moment, when he wrote "This is an epitome of an inner experience that united memories and expectancies. They were thereby, in spirit, united with the brotherhood and with Yahweh himself. The covenant, though simple in the beginning, even similar to many others, was crucial. With the passing centuries, it was repeated, and even changed in essential features, under the influence of growing experiences and theological theory. Yet, so vital was this incident and so profound was its influence on national history, that the essential fact is correctly expressed by the phrase "they saw God."[2] Of all the sacrificial occasions in the Old Testament, none is more impressive in sincerity and profundity, than is this Sinaitic one.

The burnt-offering and peace-offering made on this great occasion were commanded by the voice that Moses heard as he "drew near to the thick cloud where God was" (Exodus 20:21). Concealed from the people by a cloud of mystery, Moses is told "an altar of earth, you shall make for me, and shalt sacrifice on it your burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, your sheep and your oxen: in every place, where I cause my name to be remembered, I will come to you and bless you, and if you make me an altar of stone, you build it of hewn stone; for if you wield your tool upon it, you profane

1. J. C Rylaardsdam, Exegisis of "Exodus", in The Inerpreter's Bible, Vol.1,p.101
2. I. G. Matthews, The Religious Pilgrimage of Israel, p. 58.

it. And you shall not go up by steps to my altar, that your nakedness be not exposed on it" (Exodus 20: 24-26). These ordinances form part of the code found in the "Book of the Covenant", Exodus 20:22 to Exodus 23:33. It seems that the demand of the law concerning the altars was never forgotten (Deut. 27:5-6; I Macc. 4:47), although the fact that later altars had horns (I Kings 1: 50-51) and the description of elaborate altars in Ezekiel 43: 13-17, shows that Israel found ways of circumventing the ancient rudeness.[1]

The Covenant Code or the "Book of the Covenant" was a formulation of laws concerned mainly with civil justice: there are precepts of ritual law at the beginning and the end. The great Code of Hammurabi, who was the ruler of the Babylonian empire, is claimed to have indirectly influenced the formation of the Covenant Code. J. M. P. Smith claims that the Hebrews, having no extensive and inclusive law of their own, being an unsettled people for so long, "naturally adopted the Babylonian Code, gradually changing, modifying and supplementing it as experiences and needs dictated."[2] The ritual decalogue of the code, was, of course, derived from the experienees of the past, and not necessarily from the mouth of Moses. However, Moses gave to the sacrificial ritual a new spirit at least, if not a system.[3]

Part of the Ritual Decalogue, found in the Covenant Code, is in Exodus 22:29-30. "You shall not delay to offer from the fullness of your harvest and from the outflow of your presses. The firstborn of your sons, you shall give to me. You shall do likewise with your oxen and with your sheep: seven days it shall be with its dam; on the eighth day you shall give it to me." Verse 29 gives Mosaic sanction to the offering of the

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1. J. C. Rylaardsdam, Exegesis of "Exodus" in The Interpreter's Bible Vol. 1, p. 993.
2. J. M. P. Smith, Origin and History of Hebrew Law, p. 17.
3. H. E. Ryle, Canon of the Old Testament, p. 29.

first-fruits. The produce refers to grain and the juice of grapes, and probably olives. Later, in Deut. 14:22 and in Deut. 26: 1-12, the amount was set at one-tenth of the yield. The system of the tithe in later Israel rested on this originally agricultural system (Exodus 23:19, Exodus 34:26). It is indeed puzzling to understand the meaning of "the first-born of your sons". As the offering of tithes is made to recognize God's title to the land, so the offering of the first-born of man and beast shows the sovereignty of God over life. In the case of oxen and sheep, "giving unto Yahweh" meant slaughter and sacrifice. What did the "giving" mean in this context? In the primitive past, as already discussed, it is probable that first-sons were actually offered up to the deity as burnt-offerings. The story of Abraham's intention to sacrifice Isaac attests to that. However, it is impossible to imagine that the writer of such humane and merciful injunctions as in Exodus 22: 21-23, 33, should ever have included such barbarous practices in his commandments. It is thus more than probable that for first-born sons the practice of sacrifice had fallen into abeyance and some other form of dedication had taken its place. "E" is terse in this injunction as well as that concerning the first-fruits; both presupposes that the way of offering is known. Thus, in all three cases, the fullness of the harvest, the outflow of the presses and the first-born of sons and animals, we are able to see the survival of a primitive belief "that life is sacred and that the first, fresh products of fertilizing power are especially fit for sacramental and sacrificial use. It is a symbolical recognition of the need to consecrate the beginnings of enterprise, if real blessing is to follow."[1] The taboo in verse 31, in this same

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1. A. S. Peake in his Commentary on "Exodus 23:17-18 and 31", p. 187.

passage "You shall be men consecrated to me; therefore you shall not eat any flesh that is torn by beasts in the field; you shall cast it to the dogs", probably means that the Israelites must not eat the unclean flesh or blood, because of their relation to Yahweh. Also the blood could not be properly drained from it, in keeping with the ordinance of Gen. 9:4.

In regards to the Ritual Decalogue in Exodus 23: 14-19, we will not go into the detail of it because it is so similar to the "J" decalogue of Exodus 34: 17-26. Many scholars believe that the Ritual Decalogue in "E" is in fact derived from that of "J".[1]

In this chapter we have seen the influence of an advancing civilization upon the practice of sacrifice. "E" shows us the beginnings of the ritual practices that later are associated with the sacrificial system. The priestly function is stressed more because "E" believes that God is not as accessible as earlier generations believed. The question of actual human sacrifice is dealt with and denied. This writer has given us an excellent example of a vow-offering which had the intent behind it of making God do man's will. But God cannot be used. There were higher developments. Jacob comes close to making a thank-offering. Significance is given to the burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. God who is far off, comes to be present at the sacrifice and partakes of it with the people.

Lastly, the study shows many descriptions of sacrifices that are similar in "J" and "E". Both view the sacrifices as being predominantly of the gift variety, although some have an emphasis on the communion of the

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1. R. H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 224.

deity with the people at the sacrifice. We also must keep in mind what has been said earlier that there were probably other motives which underlay and influenced the Hebrew sacrifice and which are lost because of a lack of historical references and because of the passing of time.

CHAPTER IV.

THE IMPACT OF THE PROPHETS UPON THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM

In the time of the judges and the great kings, Israel boasted of her God and His strength but Israel slipped as a great nation under feeble rulers and so her God was ignored and her power was pitiful. The mountain-top experience of Moses has been lost to the corruption and sensuous behaviour which made the prophets cry out in agony, anguish and protest.

After Elijah, Israel was ravaged continuously by Syria (I Kings 20: 1-34, I Kings 25:33). Even after the crowning of Jehu, the champion of Yahweh, state affairs had gone from bad to worse. It was a bitter blow to a nation that had been strengthened with so much nationalistic pride, when Jehu paid tribute to Assyria, and five years later, Gilead and Bashan were reduced to Syrian provinces by Hazael, the king of Syria (II Kings 10: 32-33). The affliction to Israel became more bitter when Assyria turned her greedy eyes westward and sent six military expeditions against Damascus and her neighbouring allies. Dark days were these when the political, economic and religious life of Israel were being shaken. It should be remembered that Israel was divided into north and south, with Judah in the south and Israel in the north.

However, in the early years of the eighth century, in both Israel and Judah, the events took a turn for the better, an almost about-face from disaster to the relative security of prosperity. A strong ruler set on each throne, Jeroboam II in Israel (781-740 B.C.) and Azariah in Judah (783-751 B.C.) and wisely they were affiliated politically and religiously. Though lacking the splendour of Solomon, the immediate prospects did appear very promising.

The cities were populous palaces, resplendent with ivory and gold. Great revelry and banquetting made light the thoughts of prince and peasant. A social and economic change was taking place in the Israelite society. The peasant farmers were disappearing, and the land was being parcelled out into large estates, worked by tenant farmers or serf labour. Religion, secure with the Ritual Decalogue in the South in 850 B.C. and a similar document introduced into the North about 750 B.C., kept pace with the social life. Ritual was observed to the extreme degree, sacrifices were lavish, frequent festivals were crowded by gay crowds in the name of religion. The good times made them all rejoice. Apparently it paid to offer sacrifices morning and evening, to beautify the temple, to multiply the sacred days and to enrich the treasury with tithes.

Yet God worked in mysterious ways. There were rebels in the land, men who were not afraid to step aside from the swift stream of society to see under the veneer of religious pretension, the hearts of men as they really were, smothered with power and riches, corrupt with indulgence and vanity, betrayed by hypocrisy and selfish motives. Guileless laymen, who were in tune with the Infinite such as Amos, Hosea, Micah and Isaiah, came out of the wilderness, the village and the court, to speak fiery words of condemnation upon their people and priests. Later similar men of God spoke, like Jeremiah and Ezekiel. All had one point in common, in spite of their diversity of background. They showed that the sacrifices the people were so eager to offer were a means of gratification to themselves, rather than to Yahweh. They surveyed their society and saw their people putting their trust not in God, but in a system by which they thought they could placate Yahweh by giving more and costlier gifts to secure His favour. Yet with the possible exception of Jeremiah, it is difficult to believe that the

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prophets contemplated the entire and permanent abolition of sacrifice. Let us examine the words regarding sacrifices and offering by the individual prophets, not as detached sayings but in their context.

First of all, the shepherd from the hills of Tekoah, Amos, received the divine call to go forth and prophesy in the Northern Kingdom ca. 763 B.C. His burning speech expressing the observation of his critical eyes stirred the souls of the men of Israel, "Come to Bethel and transgress, to Gilgal and multiply transgressions; and in the morning, bring your sacrifices, and on the third day, your tithes; and offer by burning the thanksgiving-offering of leaven and proclaim freewill-offerings, yea, publish them abroad, for so ye love it, O ye children of Israel, said Yahweh" (Amos 4:4-5). The word used for sacrifices in these verses is "zebachim" which refers to a rite, which consisted of eating the flesh of the victim at a feast, in which the deity shared by receiving the blood and fat pieces of the victim. These frequent feasts tended to become excuses for indulgences. The words of the prophet are an ironical exhortation to the people to continue their present mode of worship, while at the same time, they sound the warning that in so doing the people transgress. Yahweh's favour could not be bought with a great number of offerings. In fact, the prophet's words imply that the more numerous their offerings, the greater was the wrath of Yahweh because they ignored His demands for righteousness and moral virtues. There is no denunciation here of sacrifices, as such, but of the fact that the sacrifices were mockery in the eyes of Yahweh, because their sincerity was betrayed by polluted minds and godless hearts. Had the offerers' mode of living been in keeping with their high calling as children of Israel, in all probability, the prophet would not have denounced their mode of worship. This is brought out again in Amos 5:4-6, "...Seek ye me and ye shall live; but seek not

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Bethel, nor enter Gilgal, and pass not over to Beersheba; for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity and Bethel shall become a vain thing. Seek Yahweh and ye shall live". What a warning! People were more interested in seeking the shrines than in seeking God. The shrines are the ends of worship, rather than the means. But that does not mean that the worship would be futile if belief and mode of life were worthy.

In Amos 5:21-23 the prophet declares, "I hate, I despise your feasts, (feasts", haggîm, are the three feasts at which every male had to appear, Exodus 23:14; Exodus 34:23) "and I will not delight in your solemn assemblies ("Assemblies" refers to the spring and harvest feasts and also can mean all religious offerings) and though you offer me your burnt-offerings and meal-offerings, I will not accept them, neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs for I will not hear the melody of thy viols". Taken by itself, this passage certainly reads as though the prophet contemplated the entire abolition of sacrifices. But it was the sacrifices as offered by these people of unclean lips and hands, not sacrificing itself, that Amos was condemning. Even their psalms and music, harmless as they were in themselves, are hateful from such worshippers. The prophets were practical men, their vision being quickened by communion with God and they understood those with whom they had to deal. With their own religious zeal, the sight of the worshippers steeped in sin, yet going through the ritual of worship, reviled them, but not the worship itself. All that was needed was the unfailing justice between man and man, running down as waters like a mighty stream. If men failed to obey, then God's righteousness would come down upon them like a rampaging river overflowing its banks. If the people were concerned about

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right conduct then the sacrificial ritual would serve its purpose and they would be the people of Yahweh and he would be their God.

In the preceding chapter, it was mentioned that Amos did not care to recognize that sacrifices were offered in the wilderness. Perhaps he actually was not familiar with the "J" and "E" documents, although he evidently knew the existence of the forty years in the wilderness. Peake suggests that Amos is inferring that the elaborate ritual of his day was then non-existent. Oesterley believes that verse 25 implies an affirmative answer, the meaning being "Did not your forefathers offer me sacrifices, which were acceptable because they were offered in faithfulness and sincerity?" the implication being, "Why then do you offer me sacrifices which, on account of your sins and false ideas about your God, Yahweh, are worthless and unacceptable?"

The prophet Hosea was the courageous evangelist of love in Israel around 740 B.C. Personal experience of the faithlessness of a loved wife opened his eyes to the deeper meaning of the bond between the Israelites and Yahweh. As he gazed upon the fickleness and insincerity of God's people, it is not surprising that he uttered such a stormy blast in Hosea 6:6, "For I desired mercy and not sacrifice and knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings". Again, we are not to take these words as advocating the absolute abolition of sacrifice. The priests are banded together to take advantage of the sacrificial system and they rob the worshippers like bandits hiding on the highway. In contrast to their behaviour, Hosea emphasizes that God demands love, both for Himself and between man and man. In comparison to this, mere sacrifice is worthless. Sacrifice requires the spirit of love.

In Hosea 8:11-13, the prophet directs his attention to the ritual

practices.

> Because Ephraim has made many altars for sinning, altars have been unto him for sinning. I wrote for him the ten thousand things of my law. but they are counted as a strange thing. As for the sacrifices of mine offerings, they sacrifice flesh and eat it; but the Lord has no delight in them. Now will he remember their iniquity and visit their sins; they shall return to Egypt;

The altars which have been multiplied refer to the Baal-polluted worship of the majority of the people. Baal-worship had so infused the Israelites' religion that often it was difficult to clearly distinguish the two. "They love sacrifice" probably refers to the cultus that abound in the blood of offerings. Contrary to the real purpose of the sacrifice, they were now misused as occasions for gala feasts; under such conditions they are abominations to Yahweh. In Chapter 11:2, Hosea reiterates the profanity of sacrificing unto Baal: when the Israelites entered Canaan "they sacrificed unto Baalim and burned incense to graven images." This is the prostitution of sacrifice. Just as Hosea's wife was unfaithful to him, so Israel, the spouse of Yahweh, was an adulteress, because she was guilty of infidelity.

In Hosea 3:4-5 we read, "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without kind, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without pillar, and without ephod or teraphim; afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek Yahweh their God." This would indicate that Hosea never contemplated the abolition of sacrifice, for here he regards the inability to offer sacrifices only as a period of deprivation and isolation. Similarly in Hosea 5:6, we read "They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek Yahweh; but they shall not find Him, He hath withdrawn Himself from them." Therefore the privilege of worshipping Yahweh by offering the best of the herds and flocks is withdrawn, because the people were so unworthy because of their sin.

In the year of King Uzziah's death, 740 B.C., Isaiah saw the Lord,

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high and lifted up, and from that moment he became one of Isreal's great outspoken prophets, pleading with the people of Israel to turn from their licentious ways unto Yahweh. In Isaiah 1: 11-14 the prophet speaks in forthright language "I have had enough of burnt-offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of he-goats; when you come to appear before me, who requires of you this trampling of my courts? Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and sabbath and the calling of assemblies. I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. Your new moons and your appointed feasts, my soul hates; they have become a burden to me, I am weary of bearing them." Certainly these words seem to imply that Isaiah wanted the entire offering of sacrifices to be abolished. However, from the context, this is not the case. Isaiah had a truly wonderful religious experience through which he had dedicated his soul to the service of God. He was insistent upon the need of observing the divine commands, eager for the people of Israel to draw closer to God, as he had done in the temple, but he could see the hypocrisy of their present action. He loathed their attitude of sacrificing. He realized that the sacrifices were the external ways of showing one's inarticulate devotion to Yahweh. They could be the means of keeping up the relationship between the worshipper and his God, that is, if they were offered by a sincere heart.

Furthermore, in verse 15 of the same chapter the prophet states, "And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers I will not listen." Prayer was in many cases associated with sacrifice.[1] Here, it is directly joined to it; so that what is intended in regard to the offering of sacrifice must apply equally to the

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1. Buchanan Gray, Sacrifices in the Old Testament, p. 86.

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offering of prayer. The two cannot be separated in this passage, but it seems inconceivable to say that Isaiah was desiring the abolition of prayer. Sacrifices, like prayer, must be offered in the right spirit.

Several other verses could be used to substantiate the contention that Isaiah did not intend the rite of sacrifice to be abolished. The Temple held a special place in his thinking. It was there that he met Yahweh face to face, and with the live coals he was cleansed. Again and again (Isaiah 30:19-21; 37:21-35), he maintained the inviolability of the Temple. But for what purpose did the Temple exist in his day, if it were not for the offering of sacrifices? Again in chapter 29:1, "Ho, Ariel, Ariel, the city where David encamped! Add ye year to year; let the feasts run their round," ('Ariel' means the hearth of God, the place where sacrifices were offered.) This verse shows that Isaiah takes for granted that for the present, the feast of which the sacrifices formed a central part, would continue.

Micah, who prophesied in the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah, (Jeremigh 26:18) takes a similar stand to Isaiah, Amos and Hosea, in that he is criticizing a system which was regarded by those who put their trust in it as a system, not of establishing communion with God, but for making gifts to him to secure His favour. "With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (Micah 6: 6-7). In other words, the people are asking the prophet in their perplexity, "What gift is costly enough to please Yahweh? Willingly would we give it to Him if thereby we could get Him to wipe out our debts to Him which is entailed by our sins and transgressions."[1]

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1. Buchanan Gray, Sacrifices in the Old Testament, p. 42.

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Thus the people are acting on the theory that the costlier the gift, the more acceptable it is. Micah answers their questions, "He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:7). Without the justice, kindness and communion with God, sacrifices are worthless.

Jeremiah was a man whose personal fortunes and prophetic activity were closely related to the circumstances which resulted in the captivity of his country in 586 B.C. Thus Jeremiah and the "Deuteronomist" were contemporaries. He lived under the reforming zeal of King Josiah. He is then a century later than the four prophets whom we have just discussed. A number of kings fell by the wayside in the meantime and thousands of sacrifices were doubtlessly bestowed upon the altar. What then is the attitude of this prophet to sacrifices?

> As has often happened in the history of religion, that which was begun in the spirit was perfected in the flesh. The high ideal cherished by the best minds of the prophetic party, of a holy and righteous community, living in moral fellowship with Yahweh and assured of His protection, degenerated into an empty formalism, which substituted a superstitious reverence for the Temple, for love to God and obedience to His will. The Temple became even more than the Law Book, the Talisman of the spurious piety, that sprang up in the latter half of Josiah's reign.[1]

Jeremiah contrasts them to the sacrifices offered in sincerity and simplicity to Yahweh as embodied in the Mosaic revelation as found in the teachings of Yahweh.

In Jeremiah 14:10, we read "And Yahweh said unto me, Pray not for the people for their good. When they fast, I will not hear their cry, and when they offer me burnt-offering and meal-offering, I will not accept them; but I will consume them by the sword, by famine and by pestilence."

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1. J. Skinner, Studies in the Life of Jeremiah, p. 118.

Jeremiah here is not condemning sacrificial worship but is emphasizing the obvious fact that the sacrifices are not accepted because the people have been unfaithful.

Jeremiah's most important passage in regard to sacrificial worship is in his "Temple Oration" found in its fullest account in chapter 7: 1-14, which because of its length will not be quoted here. In the first half of the passage, the thought is expressed, if only the people would do what is right in the sight of God, they would dwell secure in the sight of God. There is here no threat of the destruction of the Temple; all would be well, if only the people would truly amend their ways and their doings. However, in the next seven verses, Jeremiah blasts their false trust in the inviolability of the Temple, and the idolatrous worship there, predicting the destruction of the Temple and the sacrificial worship practised there. However, it does not necessarily follow that if the people had been living sincerely and uprightly, the sacrificial worship would have been condemned.

To this point the impression has been given that Jeremiah approved, or at least would tolerate,the institution of sacrifice, as such, if used in the right manner. But Jeremiah 7:22, has not yet been considered, which challenges some of the practices which have gone before. In the context, he has been mockingly coaxing them to continue to "add their burnt-offerings to your sacrifices and eat the flesh." Suddenly, he says "For in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning offerings and sacrifices." This is a direct denial of what has been said by "J" and "E" in the Ritual Decalogue, which

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must have been familiar to Jeremiah. The reference to old paths in chapter 6:16 implies that he even was familiar with the Mosaic laws. Surely Jeremiah knew that this statement was in direct contradiction to what was written in the "Book of the Covenant", but he was a man obsessed with an overpowering thirst for righteousness, being sickened with the wickedness of his countrymen. It is quite possible, then, that these rash words came at a time when he was uncontrollably beside himself with indignation. Perhaps they were not in keeping with his calmer self. Whatever the excuse of the truth, we cannot deny that Jeremiah did envisage and advocate the entire abolition of sacrifice, but he was the one and only prophet of which this could truthfully be said.

Ezekiel was a man whose writings stamp him as being tedious and unattractive, yet Professor McFadyen says "He is sensitive to every current of life about him, he knows its every whisper".[1] He is included among the pre-exile prophets, yet he was rightfully one of the prophets of the exilic period. He was carried to Babylon in 597 B.C. Undoubtedly he was fully aware of the "E" document, and the religious and moral condition of the people in the homeland. Ezekiel descriptively writes of the terrible depravity among the people: blood-guiltiness and vidence (Jeremiah 7:23; 11:6; 22:2-4) adultery and incest (22: 10-11) usury, oppression, dishonest gain (22: 12-13), idolatry, and profanity (22: 38), to name only a cross-section; yet these people still were sanctimonious in their worship. In 20:28, we read: "For when I had brought them into the land ... then they looked for every high hill and every thick tree, and they offered there their sacrifices, and also they made their sweet savour, and they poured out their drink-offerings."

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1. A. S. Peake, Commentary, p. 501.

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In 5:11, Yahweh gives a terrible indictment that punishment must follow: "Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord God, surely because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all abominations, I will hew thee down and mine eyes shall not spare thee, and I will have no pity." Such must be the ghastly state of the moral health of the nation. Yet, in spite of this degradation, Ezekiel firmly believed, that when the people repented of their unfaithfulness to God, their sacrifices would be accepted and the sanctuary, wherein the offerings were made would stand for evermore: "There will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings (terûmah) and the first-fruits with all your holy gifts" (20:40). "Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them; I will be their God and they shall be my people. Then the nations will know that I, the Lord, sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary is in the midst of them for evermore." (37: 26-28) This is the motivating spirit which permeated into the post-exilic thought with its Priestly Code.

From this brief study which is far from being complete, it can be seen that the prophets viewed sacrifices as being like prayer, as a vehicle to express the sentiments of the soul, and for the revelation of the spirit of life to those who sincerely served and sought God. As it is the sttitude that counts behind prayers, so it is the disposition behind the sacrifices which is all-important. As ritualistic lip-service and repetitious words without meaning can be criticized, so the prophets condemned the practices of sacrifice in their day. With the possible exception of Jeremiah, the prophets did not look forward to a time when the sacrificial system would be abolished. Yet, because of their at-one-ment with God, they paved the way for the time when the system as a system would be no longer necessary, being superseded by Jesus, who demands not specific token-sacrifice, but a whole sacrificial life.

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CHAPTER V

THE "D" DOCUMENT'S DESCRIPTION OF SACRIFICES

"Thus saith the Lord" was the word spoken by the prophets, but their words and ways were too revolutionary and perhaps ahead of their time. Therefore their impression upon the masses was like a trickle of water running down the face of a hard granite mountain. "Let justice roll down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" pleaded Amos, but with no success. The people of Israel were too busy indulging in the sensuous pleasures of their festivals which were held in the name of Yahweh. The high ideals of the prophets were in opposition to the ways that were being perpetuated in the degenerated rituals led by the priests with the consequence that the rituals were discarded. The sacrificial system of the cultus went from bad to worse in the period of the eighth and seventh century prophets. Following the collapse of northern Israel in 721 B.C. the people of Judah became more carefree, and more indifferent to the ethical, humanitarian, and democratic emphasis in their religion. The words of the prophets, instead of helping, added fuel to the fire. Something had to happen to the religion of Abraham and Moses which was sinking repidly into a deteriorated insignificance amid the heathen influences of the Assyrians and their religion.

As history so often bears out, God provided a leader in their time of crisis. A man inspired by the lofty ethical demands of God as taught by the prophets and yet fully aware of the current trend and the practical difficulties, was able to bring about a compromise between the two trends of thought. His work, a synthesis between layman, prophet and priest was found in the Temple in 621 B.C., a book which now forms the nucleus of our book of Deuteronomy.

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> It was brief, stirring, denounced injustice and false worship and harked back to the days of the Covenant with Yahweh. To those who had been hoping and working for the advancement of true religion, and for the uprooting of the pagan rites, that still flourished in the country, it was a god-send, a weapon with which to win the final stages of the religious war".[1]

The author of " "D" and the Deuteronomic Code" was a priest in Jerusalem in the middle of the seventh century B.C., who, like the prophets, revolted against the depravity of the cultus. Upon him at least the prophetic utterances and teachings had made a deep and lasting impression. He was able to see some essential agreement between the priest and the prophet and at the same time he realized that the two types of religion contrasted in Micah 6:7, could only be brought together through mutual concessions. He grasped the true significance of the generalities of the prophets, giving them a practical definition. "Righteousness" in Amos, is only a principle, but to the "Deuteronomist", it necessitated the observing of "all commandments before Yahweh, our God, as He has commanded us" (6:25). Like Hosea, he believed that the essence of true religion was love for God (6:5), but this love consisted primarily in keeping the divine commandments (7:9; 10:21f; 11:1; 13:22). "The traditional ceremonies of the cult such as festivals and sacrifices were no longer to be regarded as a gift or tribute paid to God, but merely as the expression of religious feeling, particularly gratitude for God's blessings,and rejoicing (Deut. 5:15; 12:11; 14:1-15; 26:18).[2] This "Book of the Law" when found,naturally created quite an uproar in Jerusalem. King Josiah, a wise and benevolent ruler, declared it to be authoritative on the advice of an able committee (II Kings 22: 14-20). He immediately began a thorough reformation, trying to enforce the new practical message of the prophets. Though the reformation did not immediately secure all that Josiah

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1. I. G. Matthews, The Religious Pilgrimage of Israel, p. 135.
2. R. H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament, p.180.

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had aimed at, its effect was immense.

Upon examination of the content of the "Deuteronomic Code" (12:1-26: 15) it becomes evident that the laws contained therein are not wholly new, but that they form a revision and expansion of a previously existing code, namely, the "Covenant Code". One half of the subjects legislated upon by the Deuteronomic Code had already been treated in the Covenant Code. In few of the cases however, is the legislation identical. In most instances the "Deuteronomic Code" shows distinct divergence from the "Covenant Code" which shows the influence of the prophets over the two hundred intervening years.

The Deuteronomic Code" required that all the firstlings of cattle and sheep shall be sacrificed to Yahweh (Deut. 15: 19-23). In the "Covenant Code" (Exodus 22:29, 30:19) we find the same ordinance with one exception, namely, that in the latter, there was a time limit of eight days for the offering of the sacrifice, while in the former, it is extended to one year. This is,no doubt, due to the fact that all sacrifices must now be made at the Temple in Jerusalem, a requirement which would be impracticable if a trip to Jerusalem were necessary within eight days after the birth of every firstling of cattle or sheep.

The three annual pilgrimages or feasts called the Passover or the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of the First-Fruits and the Feast of the Ingathering, found in the "Covenant Code" (Exodus 23: 14-17; 34: 18-20, 22, 24, 25), have been considered.[1] The ordinances in the "J" and "E" documents are the same except that the Passover is not mentioned explicitly by the Elohist. In the "Deuteronomic Code" (Deut. 16:1-17), the

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1. See above, p. 31.

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feasts are the Passover, the Festival of Weeks and the Festival of Booths. The Passover is now enlarged to include the Feast of Unleavened Cakes. This doubtlessly was also to decrease the necessity of so much travel to the single sanctuary. Whereas, the old ritual decalogue requires the presence of only the males at the festivals, Deuteronomy definitely prescribes that all men, their sons and daughters, their male and female slaves, the Levites, the resident aliens, the orphans and the widows shall be present.

The old law however, is repeated verbatim in Deut. 16:16, with reference to the necessity of the males presenting themselves at the sanctuary three times a year, but in the case of the second and third appearances, the presence of nearly everyone is required. The Deuteronomist strived to give the Passover an historical significance in the new legislation. The Passover victim, which could be either a lamb or an ox, must be slain and eaten in the evening of the first day of the feast, nothing being allowed to remain over. In the morning, the sacrificers may return to their homes, but no leavened bread may be eaten for six days. On the seventh day, the Sabbath, no work is to be done. The Festival of Weeks is to remind the Israelites that their ancestors were once slaves in Egypt, and since the escape was originally on the new moon of Abib, that date was set for the Feast of the Passover. Also by the Deuteronomic Code, the Passover is transformed from a family festival to a national festival at the one and only sanctuary (Deut. 16:6). It is quite apparent that the Festivals of the First-Fruits and Ingathering in the "Covenant Code" are essentially the same as the Deuteronomic Festivals of Weeks and Booths.

Both the old and the new ritual ordinances included the prescription that no man shall appear before the Lord empty-handed. However the similarity

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ceases, as the Deuteronomist gave the great "Stewardship" command, "that every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessings of the Lord, your God, which he has given you". (Deut. 16:17.)

Thus we find that the Deuteronomist has used many of the laws of the Covenant Code but he re-adjusted the legislation to the new idea of the centralization of worship in Jerusalem, which consequently gave increasing recognition to the authority of the priesthood and a greater interest in the details of ritual.

The most important laws in the new legislation of the "D" document is given the first place in the Code. It is the law, requiring that all public worship and sacrifice shall be carried on at a central shrine, namely the Temple in Jerusalem. (Deut. 12: 2-28). In centralizing it, their religion became truly nationalistic. As we have discussed,the three annual feasts were now, according to the Code, destined to be held only at the Temple. To assist in the many new duties at the Temple, the Levitical priests, who were in charge of the local shrines, were moved to Jerusalem.

'Why was the Deuteronomist so anxious to centralize the worship?" There must have been some very apparent reason because King Josiah lost no time to heed this command in 621 B.C. The revolutionary move was a swift, fatal blow aimed at the pagan worship that had permeated and nearly obliterated the Israelite worship of the true Yahweh. The prophets, utterly disgusted with the desecration of Yahweh-worship, waged a bitter verbal war against the Baalim infiltration. Now the Deuteronomist had a new and constructive solution to offer to eradicate the pagan depravity; do away with all the local shrines and have one central sanctuary for sacrifice and festival.

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When the children of Israel had entered the promised land of Canaan, they were more or less a united homogeneous group, rallying around the sacred ark of the Covenant. However, the conquest of Canaan was gradual and piecemeal, and if worship was to be practised at all, it must be done by several tribes at local sanctuaries. Unity of the people and of worship gave way to the older conception of the clan as a society for all purposes of common life, among which worship was considered as the chief.[1] This itself could not be considered a retrogression, but the tribes were particularly exposed to the inevitable temptation of borrowing elements from the Baalim worship around about them, particularly in Northern Israel.[2] They learned that the practice of Baal went hand in hand with their new mode of life, that of agriculture. They had never considered Yahweh, the nomadic God of the desert, to be an agricultural God. The sanctuaries of Baal became the shrines of the pseudo-Yahweh-Baal worship. Thus, the Deuteronomist with a sweep of his mind, went through the country-side and gathered up these local sacrifices and rites into a truly national worship of Yahweh. The formidable task was made considerably easier by an extraordinary situation, namely the invasion of Sennacherib in 701 B.C. Sennacherib tells himself that he captured in Judah alone "forty-six of his strong walled cities, as well as small cities in the neighborhood, which were without number."[3] This could be taken to mean that in every one of these cities all over the land, the local sanctuary was desecrated or destroyed and its idols carried captive. Conversely as the local sanctuaries were destroyed or plundered, the prestige of the Temple in Jerusalem, which escaped such treatment, was enhanced.

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1 A. C. Welch, Religion of Israel, p 208
2. A C Welch, Religion of Israel, p 193
3. J. M. P. Smith, Origin and History of Hebrew Law, p. 55
(who in turn refers to D. D. Luckenbill, Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia, p. 120)

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Two of the rites that were part and parcel of the Canaanitish Baalim that were particularly repulsive to any man who had met Yahweh were (1) The worship of Asherah, a tree or pole, planted or set up beside the altar and the pillar or Mazzebah (Ex. 23:24; I Kings 14:23; II Kings 3:2, 10:26, 17:10, 18:4, 23:14), and (2) The practice of religious prostitution The former, which has been found by Macalister in his excavation of Gezer and which evoked the disapproval of Hosea (10:2) was prohibited by the Deuteronomist in Deut. 16: 21-22, and the latter in Deut. 23:17f. This latter was also denounced by Amos (Amos 2:7-8) and by Hosea (Hosea 4:14). At any semi-pagan shrine, there would be groups of men and women who were dedicated to the service of the god or his shrine by gratifying the lusts of men and women who came to the shrine for the purpose of obtaining such service. We can now understand the vigor of condemnation of the prophets and the crisis which the Deuteronomist faced. He firmly forbade the bringing of any gains from such service as a votive offering to the Temple of Yahweh.

To return to the centralization of worship in Jerusalem it had a marked effect on every aspect of Hebrew Life. Jerusalem was like the hub of a wheel, uniting the outlying districts, as the pilgrims would mix with other pilgrims from different parts, thus broadening their provincial outlook. The priesthood at Jerusalem became a segregated and privileged class, with the progress of time as the people brought their wealth to Jerusalem. Jerusalem's merchants, likewise profited from the sale of sacrificial animals for the Deuteronomist provided that "if the way is too long for you, so that you are not able to bring the tithe, when the Lord your God blesses you, because the place is too far from you, which the Lord your God chooses to set His name there (Jerusalem), then you shall turn it into money, and bind up the money in

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your hand, go to the place for whatever you desire, oxen or sheep, or wine or strong-drink, whatever your appetite craves; and you shall eat there before the Lord your God, and rejoice you and your household." (Deut.14:14-27).

Moreover, the closing of the local shrines and the prohibition of all public worship outside the Jerusalem Temple would deprive everyone in the country of the facilities of public worship. This would throw the people back on their own spiritual resources. Some, no doubt, became strictly apathetic to religion as there was no penalty prescribed in the case of the man who disobeyed the law of the central sanctuary as long as he did not worship any god other than Yahweh, for which the penalties were severe and detailed (Deut. 13: 6-11). Others, however, cultivated a genuine religious experience and learned to keep up their devotion without the stimuli of constant ceremonial worship. Deuteronomy 12:20 ff. makes provision for the worshippers who lived too far from Jerusalem. They were at liberty to slaughter animals at home provided "you do not eat the blood, for the blood is the life, and you shall not eat the life with the flesh" (Deut. 12:23), or keep back "the holy things which are due from you" at the Temple (Deut. 12:26).

Another important matter which the Deuteronomist legislated upon was the payment of the tithe. "You shall tithe all the yield of your seeds which comes forth from the field, year by year. And before the Lord your God, in the place where he will choose, to make His name dwell there, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine and of your oil and the firstling of your herd and flock; that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always" (Deut. 14:22-29). A warning is given to remember the Levite,

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who no longer has a "portion or inheritance with you." Every three years, not only does the Levite share in the tithe of the produce but also "the sojourner, the fatherless and the widow, who are within your towns... that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do " (Deut. 14:29). The tithe was not an innovation in the land nor may we suppose that tithes were now required for the first time. The Elohist mentioned in Gen. 28:22, that Jacob volunteered a tithe of everything Yahweh bestowed upon him. Samuel, in I Sam. 8:15, is made to warn the Israelites that the king they ask for will take the tithes of their flocks. Amos (4:4) referred to the practice of tithing. However, the Deuteronomic Code makes it a legal matter for the first time.

"The underlying theory of this code as also of the whole history of pre-Exilic propheey," says J. M. P. Smith, "is that piety brings prosperity, and that adversity and disaster are brought about by disobedience and sin. The law has behind it, the divine sanction; to do as the law requires is to merit the favour of Yahweh; to set the law at naught or to ignore it, is to be disobedient or neglectful of Yahweh, and will bring upon Israel His wrath."[1] Thus in the Deuteronomic writings, sacrifice explicitly and implicitly has associated with it a propitiatory significance, even though on the surface it often appears to be a simple gift to Yahweh for His goodness.

Perhaps we might at this point, before we consider sacrifice in the Priestly writings, consider the influence of the writer of the Deuteronomic Code on the I and II Books of Kings. The compiler of Kings, a contemporary of Jeremiah,and very much like him, utilized the Deuteronomic law as a standard by which he judged both men and actions. For example, all the

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1. J. M. P. Smith, The Origin and History of Hebrew Law, p. 69

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monarchs of Judah are judged as to whether the high places were abolished so that people would no longer sacrifice and burn incense at them. (I Kings 15: 11f, 22:43; II Kings 8:18, and 27, 12:23, 14:34, 15:3, 4 and 34f.) Even in the cases of Hezekiah and Josiah, who both did what was right in the sight of Yahweh, it is thought necessary to emphasize this by adding that they did away with the high places. Thus obedience to the Deuteronomic law is the qualification for an approving verdict. Deviation from it is the source of ill success.[1] The kings of Israel are all considered evil because they favoured the high places. The stereotyped phraseology, used to imply the worship in the high places, cannot be assigned to any other than the Deuteronomic redactor.[2] In fact, the original account of King Solomon's prayer of dedication in I Kings 8:22-66 (omitting 41-51) is strictly Deuteronomic in language, style and tone. "Let your heart therefore be wholly true to the Lord, our God, walking in His statutes and keeping His commands as at this day." (v. 61). Then in the next three verses "the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifices before the Lord. Solomon offered as peace offerings to the Lord, twenty-two thousand oxen and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the people of Israel dedicated the house of the Lord." Thus a few hundred years before the finding of the code in 621 B.C., the Deuteronomic interpretation of sacrifice was attributed to the people of Israel. Many other illustrations could be given of the occurrence of the Deuteronomic religious ideas in I and II Kings. Here are the most significant: I Kings 2:1-4. (David's last words to Solomon charging him to keep the commandments and ordinances of Yahweh), 9:9-13, 29-38, 12:26-31, 14:1-24, 15:1-15; II Kings 17:21-23, 22:23:1-15, and 21-28.

1. S. R. Driver, Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, p 189

2. W. O. E. Oesterley and T. H. Robinson, The Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament, p.105

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CHAPTER VI

SACRIFICE IN THE "P" DOCUMENT

The Yahwist and the Elohist took sacrifices for granted, and in their own way described them as they existed in tradition, except that they were apparently oblivious to the actual propitiatory aspect, if that idea had existed at all in the early times. The Deuteronomist viewed the sacrificial system as he saw it in the seventh century with the words of the prophets ringing in his ear and consequently he developed a set of ordinances by which the system was able to be regulated. When we speak of the Priestly writer it should be borne in mind that the work is the result of many priestly hands. With the sting of exile in his heart he developed an extraordinary sacrificial system, by which he intended to restore the right relationship between the Lord and Israel. In retrospect he represented it as being divinely sanctioned and received in the first instance through and under the leadership of Moses. The sacrifices and offerings required by the Lord were partly taxes and partly fines, either national or private in scope, "the amount of these dues, while fixed arbitrarily, was no more a subject of discussion, in view of the absolute authority of the divine law, than the taxes and fines imposed by a dictator upon his subjects.[1]

Matthews with his apt use of words has described the difference exceedingly well between the pre-exilic system (including "D") and that of the priestly writings.

> It is like passing from the intellectual and moral warmth of the chapel to the maze of the High Mass in the Cathedral. Everything is strange. Indeed we have to learn a new language; even old words have an entirely new meaning, and the very pattern of thought is the antithesis to that of the prophets. Words like justice, righteousness and repentance, the stock in trade of the prophets, have all but disappeared (cf. Lev. 19:9-18, 33-36) and in their place we find the altar (100 times), the tabernacle (106 times),

> The sin-offering and the guilt-offering (126 times), the oblation (78 times), the fire-offering, the mercy-seat, and the atonement The congregation has displaced the nation, and the priest and his acolytes meet us at every turn In place of repentance, we catch a fleeting glimpse of confession (Lev 5:5, 16:21; Num 5:7), which originated as a magical, purifactory rite, and is as far removed from the prophetic idea as penance is from penitence. Cleansing was a ceremonial act accomplished by rites of water, fire odors, or blood, carried out with technical skill by qualified priests. It follows that holiness and holy, as used in "P", derived their meaning from ritual, and not from the social concept of religion. The new vocabulary and new forms all belong to the hierarchy, and are the bearers of a sweet savor of Yahweh. But we have passed from the presence of the prophets, and have entered the courts of the courteous, well-groomed, soft-spoken servants of God, where we hear the call, "Be ye holy, for I am holy".[1]

Before examining achievements supported by the "Priestly Code", it may be well to briefly see some of the developments in the thoughts and ways of the people. Hosea's prediction as to the cessation of the sacrificial system, if sincerity of heart was lacking, was fulfilled. The exiled people were deprived of their stated means of communion with God, yet the destruction of the external means of worship was not interpreted by the religious leaders as a condemnation of the system of worship. It was Ezekiel, the prophet of the Exile who had hopes of a reformed sacrificial system of worship. The priests who escaped into Exile, carried with them a minute knowledge of the Temple and its ritual. Possibly they might have had summaries, other than the "D" document, in which the sacrificial system could have been elaborated. As the memories of the Temple were cherished, they realized that it was their pious duty to compile a faithful record of the ancient glories and sanctities. To these, the most erudite priests, lawyers and scholars added the thoughts of years of reflection by which relition took on a new coat of piety.

Through a gradual realization of Yahweh's great stature, the Israelites once more saw their place as His children. The results of their contemplation and the tenets of their convictions were adapted as authoritative

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1. I. G. Matthews, Religious Pilgrimage of Israel, p. 184.

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under Ezra around 398-7 B.C. in the form of the "Priestly Code" which had a granite solidarity, enabling it to last hundreds of years as a cornerstone of the Yahweh church.[1]

The priestly writings were not limited to the Code, although it does constitute a large part. In the first chapter of Genesis, the priestly viewpoint is given. It is also given throughout the Pentateuch, interwoven with the "J" and the "E". Yet this whole history is written from the Exilic theological standpoint, and is indebted to the Second Isaiah who had identified the Lord with the Lord of history and thus came to the conclusion that there is no other god in existence besides Yahweh.[2] It is not, therefore, an objective report but more of a religious interpretation of history, written in such a way as to substantiate the theology of the fifth century B.C. These historical parts describe, one might say, the steps by which God brought the theocratic state (the potential at least) into being in the days of Moses and Joshua. It made the Jews, in principle, a sort of monastic order, living in the world apart from outsiders, and under their own rules. During the dark exilic days, the priests as have been inferred recently, saw their own people in the light of Yahweh's holiness and became profusely convinced of the selfishness of their previous life. The injustice, sordidness, immorality, as well as the idolatry of the past had been the cause of national disasters. In looking forward to the reconstructed state and the rebuilt Temple, they believed that the danger of sin and the need of repentance must be kept strongly at the fore of the popular mind. Hence two great forms of sacrifice were insttituted by the Priestly writer, the sin-offering and the trespass-offering.

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1. W. O. E. Oesterley and T. H. Robinson, Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament, p. 223.
2. R. H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 182.

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The problem then was to evaluate sin in order that the people would know when to offer sacrifices. The writers of the Code felt that many sins of the past had occurred through ignorance. That is, they were mere involuntary or inddvertent sins, not committed in rebellion against the law or ordinance of Yahweh, but through human imperfections or human passion. These sins could include perjury, robbery, oppression, betrayal of trust and immoral relations with another man's handmaid (Lev. 5: 1-7, 19: 2 ff.; Num. 16:41 ff.). Atonement by the use of sacrifices could be made for these offences. However, sins committed with a "high hand" were unpardonable. "The person who does anything with a high hand, whether he is native or a sojourner, reviles the Lord and that person shall be cut off from among his people. Because he hath despised the word of the Lord and has broken His commandment, that person shall be utterly cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him" (Num. 15: 30-31). Such sins threw the offenders outside the covenant relation and they could make no atonement, although one or two passages seem to provide for the remission of sins (Num. 5:6 ff.; Lev. 16:21 f.). These conflicting regulations may have come from different hands and different times.[1] Thus considering the facts, Davidson writes

> The sacrifices were thus offered to a God already in a relation of grace with His people. They were not offered to attain His grace but to retain it or to prevent the communion existing between Him and His people being disturbed by the still inevitable imperfections of His people, whether as individuals, or as a whole.

The sin-offering is, consequently, the central form of sacrifice in the post-exilic religion of Israel. If a man, or the congregation as whole, withhold evidence, swear a rash oath, touch an unclean thing or violate unwittingly any of the ceremonial laws, a sin-offering "chattath" is necessary along with confession of the offence in order that pardon may be obtained

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1. A. C. Knudson, The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament, p. 311.
2. A. B. Davidson, The Theology of the Old Testament, p. 316.

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(Lev. 6.). Thus, sin-offerings are made not only for purely moral offences, but also in purificatory rites of a wholly non-moral character, such as a sin-offering made in the case of a leper as part of his official cleansing (Lev. 14:19). If a ruler should commit such a sin then the suitable offering is a he-goat (Lev. 4:24). For an ordinary person, the offering is either a she-goat (Lev. 4:29)ora ewe-lamb (Lev. 4:32). If the offender cannot afford so much, he shall bring to the priest two turtle doves (Lev. 5:7) or two young pigeons, the one to serve as a sin-offering, the other as a burnt-offering. The former must be sacrificed first. Some of the blood must be drained out at the base of the altar. The other bird shall then be sacrificed as a burnt-offering in the prescribed manner. If this offering is still more than the offender can honestly afford, he shall bring to the priest, the tenth of an ephah of fine flour (5:11) without any oil or any frankincense, since it is a sin-offering. According to Num. 5:1-10 the priest shall take part of the offering and burn it upon the altar to make atonement, while the rest of it automatically belongs to the priest himself.

In Lev. 6:14-29, special regulations controlling the function of the sin-offering are given. The sin-offering victim must be slaughtered at the same place as the victims for the burnt-offering. The priest who offers it shall eat it in the court of the Tent of Meeting. If anything touches its flesh, it immediately becomes unclean, and if any of its blood is sprinkled upon a garment, the part sprinkled must be washed in a sacred place. If it is boiled in an earthen vessel, the vessel must be broken; if it is a bronze vessel, that vessel must be scoured and rinsed with water. The priests ate the flesh of the sin-offering because it was too sacred to be touched by the laity. However, if any of its blood has been brought into

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the sanctuary to make atonement, the flesh must be burned up rather than eaten.

If perchance, the community or its representatives should err inadvertently in obeying Yahweh's commands, the community must bring one bullock. (Lev. 14:14),with the necessary cereal-offering and libation as a burnt-offering, and one he-goat as a sin-offering. The priest shall, with these, make atonement for the whole community (Num. 15:22-26). As in the individual sin-offering, only the priests could partake of the meat, after the fatty parts had been burned upon the altar. Also, if any blood was brought into the sanctuary, no sin-offering could be eaten (Lev. 6:30).

There were allied sacrifices to the sin-offering, namely the guilt or trespass-offering, the burnt-offering and the peace-offering. The guilt or trespass-offering (ʾāshām) is necessary when an unwitting trespass occurs against the ordinances of God, in respect to either the holy things (Lev. 5:15) or the rights of the property (Lev. 6: 1f). Thus if a person unwittingly sins by withholding his dues to Yahweh, or by cheating his neighbour in regard to some deposit or pledge, or by robbing his neighbour, or by lying about some lost article he has found, he must confess his guilt when he becomes conscious of it and restore the full value of the property involved. In addition he must add one-fifth of its value and hand the whole over to the priest or to the neighbour wronged, as the case may be. The priest shall make atonement for him with a ram, which the offender must bring to Yahweh. Forgiveness will then be bestowed (Lev. 5:14-19, 6:1-7; Num. 5:5-8). The ritual of these sacrifices was distinguished by especially solemn treatment of the blood, which was not merely poured out, but was put on the horns of the altar, and in some cases sprinkled before the veil of

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OF ALBERTA

the Holy of Holies. In other respects, the ritual is similar to the sin-offering and other sacrifices, with the fat being burned and the flesh eaten by the priests.

The burnt-offering, "ʿôlah," although already important in the pre-exilic period, with its "qorbān" qualities, rose to increased importance after the Exile, as it too, took on the new purpose of making atonement, of becoming reconciled to Yahweh. In fact, the "ʿôlah" became "the atoning sacrifice par excellence"[1] although the gift idea is clearly present too. The difference between the "ʿôlah" and the other atoning sacrifices was that it had a widely embracing general character, whereas the others atoned for or expiated specific sins. The "ʿôlah" was the appropriate means of approach to God of a people, or of individual persons, sensible to God's Majesty and holiness and of their standing in His sight.[2] It is significant that it was now offered every morning and every evening (the tamîdh) instead of, as previously in the morning only (Exodus 29:38ff; Lev. 6:8ff; Num. 28:3ff.). For these regular burnt-offerings, one perfect male of the flock or herd was to be used, although it was permissible also to offer turtle-doves and young pigeons (Lev. 1:14). According to Num.28: 2-8, each of these sacrifices must be accompanied by a cereal-offering of a tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with a fourth of a hin of oil from crushed olives and by a libation of a fourth of a hin of liquor to be poured out to Yahweh in the sanctuary.

The ritual is extremely detailed. The officer presented his animal at the door of the Tent of Meeting, that he might be accepted before the Lord. He then laid his hands upon the victim's head "that it shall be accepted from him to make atonement for him " (Lev. 1:4.). The animal is

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1. W. O. E. Oesterley, Sacrifice in Ancient Israel, p. 221
2. A. R. S. Kennedy, "Sacrifices," article in Hastings Dictionary of the Bible, p. 810

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OF ALBERTA

then slaughtered after which the priests presented the blood and threw it about and against the altar, that was at the door of the Tent of the Meeting. The officer then flayed the animal, cutting up its carcass (v.6) and washing its entrails and legs (v. 9). The priests laid the pieces, the head and the fat, in order upon the wood that was on the fire on the altar. Finally, the victim was burnt, "an odor pleasing to the Lord."

Besides being offered in the morning and evening the "ʿôlah" was celebrated on a magnificent scale on holy days (Num. 28: 9-31). On the Sabbath two yearling male-lambs were offered, with a cereal-offering of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour, mixed with oil and its libation. On the new moons, the burnt-offering consisted of two young bulls, one ram and seven perfect yearling male-lambs, along with a cereal-offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil for each lamb. The libation with these offerings was to be half a hin of wine for each bullock, a third of a hin for the rem, and a fourth of a hin for each lamb. In addition to this burnt-offering, there must also be a sin-offering of one he-goat. On the fourteenth day of the seventh month, which is the Passover, and on the fifteenth day, which is a festival when a similar offering is made. It is repeated on each of the seven days of the feast. On the first and tenth days of the seventh months, the same burnt-offerings are made, except that one bull suffices instead of two. The importance of the moon can be seen in the timing of these sacrifices. It is likely that some parts of the moon cult developed in later Yahweh ritual, losing its original significance.

In the pre-exilic times, the peace-offerings "shelāmîm" were the most common of all offerings. In the post-exilic times, they were reckoned

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among private sacrifices, and were divided into these categories: the votive offering", neder; the "free-will offering", nedabah; and the "thank-offering:, today. (Patterson in Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible does not believe that all three are of the same species, but Oesterley following Hengstenburg, places them in these categories). In the course of the centuries there had been a considerable development in them, but still the shelamim was a meal, which categorized it in form at least, as a communion-sacrifice. However, to this aspect was added that of atonement. The victims are the same as in the "olah": oxen, sheep and goats, but not pigeons. It was accompanied by a cereal-offering mingled with oil (Lev. 7:12). In view of the less solemn character of this offering, the regulations as to the quality of the victim were relaxed thus allowing the female animal to be sacrificed as well as the male (Lev. 3:6). In the free-will offering, the principle of the unblemished character is not rigidly insisted upon, although in the other offerings it is a requirement (Lev. 22:23). The ritual corresponded in its first stages with that of the burnt-offering and the guilt-offering. The imposition of the hands, the killing of the victim and the sprinkling of the blood upon the altar are common with the holocausts. The difference is in the distribution of the sacrifice. God of course, was entitled to the fat pieces (Lev. 3:34). The priests' portions consisted of the breast and the right thigh (Lev. 7:30,32), while the worshipper received the residue. The parts assigned to the priests were handled in a peculiar way, the breast being the wave-offering and the thigh, the heave-offering (Exodus 29:27). Each of these was an individual ceremony which dated back into antiquity, conveying ideas of consecration. In the case of the Thanksgiving, the whole had to be consumed by the worshippers on the day of the sacrifice (Lev. 7:15), while the feasts furnished by the

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OF ALBERTA

other two, might be extended another day (Lev. 7:16). At the end of the fixed time, the remnants were burned with fire outside of the camp

An understanding of these blood sacrifices enables us to consider more intelligently the Day of Atonement, for they are combined in its ritual in an impressive way and invested with peculiar characteristics. The Day of Atonement, to which no reference is found in pre-exilic literature, was the culmination of the priestly system.[1] The feasts, especially that of Booths, were joyous occasions; yet the continuous burnt-offering was a solemn reminder that the Jewish community was united in an acceptable worship before Yahweh. The Day of Atonement on the tenth day of the seventh month, was the day to which all people looked forward with great expectancy and high emotion. It was a "sabbath of solemn rest," a day "on which they should afflict their souls and do no manner of work " (Lev. 16: 29-31, 19:30, 23: 27-32) So every Jew, regardless of distance from the sanctuary, was a participant in the ceremonies and the benefits of the atonement. For one day, at least, they realized their hallowed position as God's chosen people with a glorious history in which God had continuously revealed Himself to their fathers.

The whole ritual in Lev. 16:2-28, is a beautiful and awe-inspiring drama, heightened by the meaningful ceremonies. The high priest, divested of his glorious apparel, now as a representative of the people, put on a white tunic and a plain linen girdle (Lev. 16:4), thereby symbolizing the purity of one who may enter into the presence of the Holy One. A bullock was then slain as a sin-offering for himself and the priesthood, the blood of which was collected in a bowl (Lev. 16:11-14) He then took a censer full of

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1. W. O. E. Oesterley, Sacrifices in Ancient Israel, p. 226

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coals from the altar before Yahweh, and casting incense on it, covered the mercy-seat as with a cloud. This symbolized that he as a representative was divinely protected (Lev. 16:12, 13, 22). Returning to the court, he took the bowl of blood, re-entered the Holy of Holies and sprinkled the front of the mercy-seat seven times (Lev. 16:14). Next a male goat was slain as a sin-offering, an atonement for the house and for the Holy of Holies. (Lev. 16:15). The High Priest then took the blood of the goat within the veil, and sprinkled it seven times on the mercy-seat and before the mercy-seat, to make atonement for the Holy of Holies because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel. (Lev. 16:15, 16). In carefully-ordered ceremonies, all of which have not been recorded, by the sprinkling of the blood of the bullock and of the goat, atonement was made for all suspected uncleanness of places, people and priests (Lev. 16:18-19). Then the High Priest took a scapegoat, which was dedicated to Azazel, the wilderness demon, laid both his hands on its head, confessed over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and by formulas and gesture, transferred them to the victim, which was immediately sent to the wilderness for Azazel (Lev. 16:20-22). Cleansing was then made doubly sure. The sins of Israel had been removed afar in order that the presence of Yahweh might rightfully enter.

The people took it as a sign that they had been accepted by Yahweh if, after the High Priest had entered the Holy of Holies, he returned, because had uncleanness existed anywhere, it was thought that he would surely die (Lev. 16:13). When he did return, he clothed himself again in the beautiful vestments, rich in religious symbolism. Following the usual burnt-offering for himself and congregation, he pronounced the Aaronic benediction, "The

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Lord bless thee, and keep thee, the Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee, the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." (Num. 6:24-26).

> To the devout multitude, ever eager for the protection of the most high God and trustfully accepting the guidance of the priest, this was the day of days, a holy day. All the accounts of yesteryear were cancelled, all uncleanness had been cleansed; and the spirits of wickedness had been driven out of the land. A new year, without stain had begun. Religion to them, if not an adventure, was a sacrament."[1]

It is difficult to determine what the writer of the Priestly Code intended when he considered the efficacy of the blood sacrifices. It is not likely that the Jews thought that the animal died as a substitute for them.[2] Certainly such great spirits as Ezra, and the godly priests who dedicated their lives in the preparation and clarification of the law, did not imagine that through vicarious suffering of some animal they would themselves secure divine forgiveness. If we have the substitution of one life for another, we would naturally expect that capital offences, as well as inadvertent sins,might be expiated. But scholars are in disagreement with each other. Knudson and Oesterley insist we should note that the emphasis in the ritual was not on the death of the victim, but on the sprinkling of the blood on the altar. That was the climax. "The life of the flesh" we read, "is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life." (Lev. 17:11.) This is the nearest approach to the rationale of atonement in the Old Testament.[3] It is the blood that is the efficacious element in sacrifice, and it is efficacious because it is the seat of life. But why life-blood should atone, scholars of this school are at a loss to know. Oesterley suggests probably Lods

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1. I. G. Matthews, Religious Pilgrimage of Israel, p. 200
2. H. W. Robinson, Religious Ideas of the Old Testament, p. 14
3. A. C. Knudson, Religious Teachings of the Old Testament, p, 313

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OF ALBERTA

has a point when he suggests that the blood of the victim being something very holy had the effect of conferring holiness on the objects or being, which it touched, which is to say, of consecrating them as making atonement for them.[1] Then Robinson, Denney and Moffatt, are scholars of a school, which believes that we definitely cannot find the efficacy of the atonement in the blood. Robinson writes

> The statement that 'it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life' is in perfect agreement with the Hebrew idea of the bloody soul; but the 'atonement' made consists of the restoration of a quasi-phusical rather than in the forensic conceptions of Protestant Theology. The blood rites are indeed central in sacrifice, and they may form its original nucleus; but they are to be explained from the ideas of primitive animism, not from those of modern jurisprudence.[2]

In any case, there is no suggestion that the life of the victim was looked upon as a substitute for that of the sinner. Let us look at the atonement in another way. The frequent Hebrew expression for atonement is "kipper" which seems to be a metaphor for "covering". It is important to remember that the trouble with sin is that it is an act of disloyalty which breaks off personal communion. The offended one in his injury has the just right to remove the offender from his sight. The problem then is up to the sinner to seek reconciliation, to do something to propitiate and regain the confidence of God, whom he has offended. He must do something by which he could regain his covenant relationship. The sacrificial cultus of the Priestly Code was a means by which God graciously provided reconciliation and atonement in the sense of covering or blotting out, that which caused the separation.

> Man's sacrificial act of worship atoned for sin in the sense that it "covered" him, his sin, or the eyes of the Divine Judge, so that the latter no longer saw the sin. God's holiness was a consuming fire in

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1. W. O. E. Oesterley, Sacrifices in Ancient Israel, p. 225.
2. T. H. Robinson, Religious Ideas of the Old Testament, p. 146.

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the midst of uncleanness. In the presence of that holiness no mortal, sinful man could exist. But God has provided a 'covering' of which man could avail himself, and with the aid of which the broken, personal relationship could be reconstituted. To comprehend Israel's conception of atonement, therefore, one must keep in mind the metaphor behing it, and relate it closely with the more abstract conception of forgiveness and reconciliation.[1]

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1. G. E. Wright, "The Faith of Israel", article in The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 1, p. 380.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE SACRIFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

In The Old Testament, worship, the response of the individual to the Divine, was summed up in sacrifice, and in previous chapters we have seen clearly the importance and the relationships of the offerings which were sacrificed. In the New Testament, there is still worship, but the material offering is given a less important place in the act of worship. The desire to adore, to atone or to obtain benefits, is expressed in other ways such as by prayer, song, sermon, scripture and sacrament. This has been brought about by the spiritual teachings about sacrifice in the New Testament.

Real sacrifice, while it has an outward ceremonial ritual, always has an inward expression, which gives it real meaning and a spiritual foundation. For this reason we can say that sacrifice is sacramental - a concrete here-and-now act, which has a spiritual reference. Sacrifice becomes even richer and more significant with the deepening and purifying of man's spiritual sense. In Christianity, the fundamental spiritual emphases of the sacrificial teaching are kept and introduced into the worship of the church.

In sacrifice, a freewill offering is given unconditionally to God, in spite of man's possessiveness and selfishness - and this act of generosity is intended to be the best that man can do, (1) as a way of approach to God, (2) as an act of devotion, and (3) to atone for failings, shortcomings and imperfections. From primitive thought the gift was not complete without the death of the victim - the life must be released and given to the supernatural powers. Cost is always essential to sacrifice. The gift must have something of the life and work of the individual in it. Within the total, visible offering which is ritual, sacrifice is always

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implied the total invisible offering of the self. The cross has been interpreted as the absolute revelation of this important aspect of sacrifice.[1]

Israel's response to God was purest and deepest when the ritual led by the priest was harmonized with the prophet's realistic vision of God in action, with His moral and spiritual demand in the life of the worshipper. We realize that often these two aspects of worship were set in opposition. Yet it was through the leadership of both these groups that the outward and the inward were constantly corrected and kept from becoming hollow and meaningless, and through them the ethical implications of true worship were kept before the people. From the history of the Old Testament we see carried forward the spiritual growth of the truths of God's self-revelation and the human response - the increasing sense of God's greatness, yet nearness, His holiness and His presence; and the craving of man to express his adoration, awe and dependence, to be at one with God in spite of his rebellion, and to have fellowship with the living, self-revealing Being.

To the Synagogue we are indebted for the influence of an ordered framework of group worship - its balance of adoration and instruction, thanksgiving, supplication, responsive psalms and prayers. This we might have expected from the Temple. But from the Temple sacrifices the deepest effect has been upon christian symbolism. References to the sacrificial image are found in abundance in the New Testament and it is from this foundation that we think of the Passion and the Atonement - it is in the sacri-

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1. For the material in this section, I am indebted to the suggestions of Evelyn Underhill, Worship, p. 50.

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ficial language that we are introduced to the terms "the Lamb, the sin-offering" and "salvation through the Precious Blood". ".....Our greatest and deepest debt to Judaism is the quality of the realistic conception of God and realistic attitude to God which it bequeathed to the church; a conception and an attitude which rise to their height in the rare devotional sayings of Jesus, but are mainly transmitted to us in the Psalms which He so often quoted and so greatly loved."[1]

Through the cultus the worshipper was aware of the possibility of fellowship with God.. The obstacles to that fellowship were overcome through sacrifice. Sin was something that could not be considered lightly, it had to be expiated before fellowship with God could be completed. Associated with the offering was expressed real penitence - material object that it was, nevertheless through it his contrition and his longing for better things could be expressed. Reconciliation was understood to be a costly process and could not be taken for granted. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews understood this when he wrote, "and according to the law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood, there is no remission." (Hebrews 9:22) Some people try to give the shed blood some mysterious, magical powers, but those who worship in spirit and in truth know that it was the symbol of dedicated life that was made new by God's grace. At this point we are simply suggesting that with the coming of Christianity, the way was open for the richer expression of the spiritual message of the sacrificial system.

G. B. Gray makes the point that the real movement of Biblical

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1. Evelyn Underhill, Worship, p. 214

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religion is upwards from a grossly material view of religion towards a completely spiritual goal.

> It rises to the conception that there is a gift which a man can make to God, a gift of something that is his own and that God desires to receive; man can give himself; his will is his own, he can make it his present to God. [1]

We come now to the question of Jesus' life and death in relationship to sacrifice. According to Evelyn Underhill, it is clear that Our Lord's life and mission are conceived by him from beginning to end in terms of sacrifice.

> Indeed many of the incidents of that life, as described by the Synoptists, seem to have been determined by those conceptions and can only be fully understood by us in the light of the Jewish sacrificial ideas which are so plainly present in His mind. If Moses and the Prophets have told of Him, the temple sacrifices have told of Him too. For Him and His closest followers, the mysterious significance of that ancient cultus is gathered up and exhibited in His Person; and it is by the picture-language of sacrifice that they describe His unique status best. [2]

It is pointed out by Underhill that at His baptism he is given the sacrificial character of the dove, which was the meek offering of the poor. However in the context of the account of the baptism of Jesus, we are given clearly to understand that the dove symbolized the descending upon and the entering into the consciousness of Jesus of the Holy Spirit. While the dove was one of the creatures ordained for sacrifice, it was also the symbol, not merely of gentleness and peace, or of innocence or moral purity, but that of the creative power of God - the Spirit "brooded upon the waters" in the creation story.

Underhill also makes the observation that he was recognized by the Baptist as "the Lamb of God, the unsullied and prevailing sacrifice". This language is sacrificial, but it should be noted that nowhere in the Penta-

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1. G. B. Gray, Sacrifice in the Old Testament, p.54
2. Evelyn Underhill, Worship, p. 54

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teuch is a lamb spoken of as bearer of the people's sin. Again many ideas are suggested. There was the symbol of the paschal lamb which commemorated the deliverance of Israel from its slavery. There was the picture of the suffering servant "as a sheep led to the slaughter, and a lamb dumb before his shearers ... whose soul was made a guilt offering .. and who bore the sin of many" (Isaiah 53:7, 10, 12).

When the gospel was written the language of the sacrificial system was being fused into the devotion of the Christian faith. The material offering had lost its priority to the spiritual offering of the individual. Life is to be offered, and being offered is transformed by God. By this life offered and transformed, God enters into communion with men. While making observations on Underhill's position, we can agree with her conclusion.

> Even though the devotional language of the New Testament itself is not markedly sacrificial, these are the facts and conceptions which underlie it, and which have had a determining effect on the development of Christian Worship.[1]

Probably the most vivid picture of sacrifice and Christianity has to do with the interpretation of Jesus' death. Rudolph Bultmann suggests that the interpretation of Jesus' death as an expiatory sacrifice, was one of the ways the early church surmounted and transformed the scandal of the curse which in Jewish opinion had befallen the crucified Jesus.

> "Scripture proof explaining Jesus' suffering and death as divinely decreed in the manner of Luke 24:26f, can be taken as characteristic of one state of the earliest church's reflection on the subject: 'Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"[2]

He suggests that it is possible for this interpretation to be a bridge between the Old Testament and the New. The idea of Jesus' death as

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1. Evelyn Underhill, Worship, p. 55
2. Rudolph Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Vol. 1, p. 46

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an expiatory sacrifice for sins was, in itself, not unnatural to Jewish thinking. The idea of the expiating power of the suffering of the righteous, especially the martyr, had been developed. However, one problem in this regard was the foreign idea of a messiah suffering for sinners.

Two passages which speak in favour of this view of Jesus' death are from Paul:

> They are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God pur forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. (Romans 3:24,25)

> It will be reckoned to us who believe in him that raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification. (Romans 4:24,25).

John Knox states that the first passage is one of the most difficult passages in Romans to understand, yet it is one of the most important passages in the letter. These words have been interpreted in a large number of ways and have been the cause of as much controversy as anything he wrote. For our purpose, we are concerned about the word expiation, which unmistakably is associated with the sacrificial cultus.

> Commentators differ as to precisely how the term is to be understood here. Is it a reference to the "mercy seat", on which blood was sprinkled on the day of atonement? ... most modern commentators, however doubt that Paul is making precisely this use of the word. They argue that if the ritual of the day of atonement had been in Paul;s mind, he would have thought of Christ as corresponding either to the sacrificial victim whose blood was sprinkled on the top of the ark, or to the priest who sprinkled it (or as the author of Hebrews did, to both) rather than to the lid of the ark, or "mercy-seat" itself.[1]

Some commentators make the point that Paul did no more than to make use of the language of sacrifice, just as he made use of the language of the law court. He is doing more than using language. The teaching that there

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1. John Knox, Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 9, p 433

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could be no forgiveness of sin without the shedding of blood was the tradition that Paul grew up in. Using the language, he was exploding and expanding the tradition to show the Christian position that man is under the righteous judgment of God because of his sin, and that a price must be paid, a penalty must be suffered, a sacrifice must be offered, in order that God's judgment of sin is not compromised.

Bultmann draws attention to the fact that Paul associates the death of Christ with the expiation of sins in these passages, in Romans 5:9 and in reference to the Lord's Supper, I Cor. 10:16, 11:25,27. Elsewhere it is Paul's habit to speak of the "cross of Christ", rather than "the blood" of Christ. The idea suggested here of the divine righteousness demanding expiation for former sins is otherwise foreign to Paul.[1]

The interpretation of Jesus' death as having taken place "for you" (or"for us" or"for sins") is not a specifically Pauline idea but is a generally accepted Christian idea. We do not find it expressed in Acts, James, Jude and II Peter. To the idea of Jesus' death as an expiation for sin can be added statements that refer to Jesus' death as sacrifice, his blood poured out for us, as the means of forgiveness or deliverance from sin, or as a means of sanctification and purification.

In Ephesians 5:2 Paul speaks of Christ's death as "a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God". Here the reference is not suggesting Christ's death as an atonement for sin, but is to the perfection of his love which shows itself in the beauty of self-sacrificing which withholds nothing but gives all, even life itself, to God as a tribute of devotion. In Hebrews 7:27,

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1. Rudolph Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Vol 1, p. 46

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9:26, 28 and 10:10, 12, Christ's death is described as a sacrifice but it is for sin. The point that the author of Hebrews makes in these verses is that his sacrifice was "once for all". He has no need to offer sacrifices nor does he need to repeat the sacrifice for a sacrifice which has to be repeated admits that it is inadequate. The writer of this book had set out to prove that "Christ offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins". He does not stand like the priests, waiting to repeat their pitifully ineffective sacrifices but he sits in triumph, waiting for the final defeat of his enemies.

Christ's death as a passover-sacrifice is referred to by Paul in I Cor.5:7. He refers to the feast of unleavened Bread which was celebrated during the seven days following the Passover. Using an elaborate allegorical interpretation in which "leaven" is sin, and the "unleavened bread" is the righteous living of converts, Paul sees Christ as the "paschal lamb" which was slain before the opening feast. It should be noted that the Passover sacrifice had no connection with the forgiveness of sins. Because of his sacrifice we are encouraged to live the righteous life in "sincerity and truth".

There is reference in the words of the Lord's Supper to covenant-sacrifice. (c.f. I Cor. 11:23-25 and Mark 14:22-24). The old covenant of Sinai which required the blood of animals slain on the altars, is set aside for a new covenant between God and man which is signified and sealed by the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ. In Hebrews 13:13 a similar mention is made of the shedding of Christ's blood.[1] C. H. Dodd, discussing the use of

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1. Acts 20:28; Romans 3:35, 5:9; Col 1:20; Eph. 1:7, 2:13; I Pet. 1:2, 19; Heb.9:11 ff, 10:19 ff; 13:12,20 I John 1:7, 5:6-8 Rev. 1:5, 5:9, 7:14, 12:11, 19:13

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the word "blood" makes the point that in the Old Testament "the blood is the life." He then reasons "Thus, when Paul speaks of the blood of Christ, he is thinking of His life as laid down in self-dedication to God."[1] We find the sacrificial language associated with ideas and statements made about justification[2] sanctification,[3] and purification.[4] The idea of reconciliation seems to be found only in Paul.[5] God not only removes guilt but he restores man to a right relationship with Himself.

Richardson best accounts for the use of sacrificial language in the New Testament when he writes:

> At the same time it should be recognized that in the very passages which embody the language of sacrifice, the thought is often associated with ideas which belong strictly to a different category, viz. that of redemption or ransom from slavery and bondage ..... Jesus, too, with reference to his approaching sufferings, said that he 'came to give his life a ransom for many' (Mark 10:45). As it stands this need have no reference to sacrifice as such. Yet it is clearly reminiscent of Isa. 52:13-53 where the Servant is said to give his life as a guilt-offering.[6]

The most detailed attempt in the New Testament to interpret the Cross in terms of the sacrificial system is that of the writer (not Paul) of Hebrews.[7] He contrasts the Old and New Covenants and argues that the old is antiquated. Yet there is continuity between them like a copy made from a pattern. Christ is given two roles, he is the High Priest without peer, and he also is the Sacrifice. As High Priest he does not have to enter yearly to the Holy of Holies, but he entered once and for all. As Sacrifice he secures through his own blood an eternal redemption; if animal sacrifice purified the body, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who offered himself, purify the conscience and bring about the service of the living God.

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1. C. H. Dodd, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, p. 55
2. Romans 3:24f and I Cor. 6:11
3. I Cor. 6:11; Eph. 5:25f; Heb. 2:11, 9:13f, 10:10, 13:12
4. Eph 5:25 f; Heb. 1:3, 9:13f; Tit. 2:14; I John 1:7-9
5. Rom. 5:10f; II Cor. 5:18 ff
6. Alan Richardson, A Theological Word Book of the Bible, p. 213
7. Hebrews, Chapters 9 and 10.

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Alexander Purdy comments, "The pregnant phrases, making the contrast point by point, raise many questions as to the precise thoughts in the author's mind. We could wish that he were less bound by his comparison and freer to develop each phrase. How does the sacrifice of Christ achieve the result of ridding men of sin and ensuring access to God?"[1]

Finally, in the vision of the Apocalyptist, Christ is the lamb, "slain from the foundation of the world". This imagery of Christ as a slain but victorious Lamb is used by John twenty-nine times in his book. It is not to be confused with the figure used in the gospel of John. Paul spoke of the Paschal lamb but did not develop his idea. John sees the deliverance of the Israelites from the persecution of the Egyptians being brought about through the shedding of the blood of the Paschal Lamb and the plagues. He also sees the liberation of the Christians from their Roman persecutors after a series of similar destructive woes. In addition they are to be delivered or saved through the blood of Christ.

Evelyn Underhill has observed that in this work we have the earliest picture of the Christian cultus. She writes of the vision of God and the Lamb,

> The sensible accompaniments of an ordered cultus - music, song, incense, ritual movements and protractions - are all there and already taken for granted. The Eucharistic and redemptive references of this sublime picture, its Christocentric characters, are clear; but no less clear is the influence of Jewish sacrificial ideas. Stretching back to the very beginnings of man's worship, and forward to all that worship implies, it links two religious worlds.[2]

In the New Testament through the use of sacrificial language the life and death of Christ is shown as the fulfilment of all that was suggested or outlined in the Old Testament doctrine of Atonement. The doctrine

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1. Alexander C. Purdy, Exegesis on"Hebrews", Interpreter's Bible, vol. II, p. 690.
2. Evelyn Underhill, Worship, p. 92

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of Christian atonement is not merely a contrast but a fulfilling of the Old Testament. This emphasis may be greatest in Hebrews, but it is supported throughout the New Testament. The offerings in the Old Testament were inadequate and had to be repeated. In the New Testament, it is Christ who is offered once and for all and this raises for us the question "what are his disciples to offer?"

The evidence appears to be that more and more in christian worship, praise, prayer, adoration, thanksgiving, replace the objects offered in the sacrificial system.

The greatest offering, like that of Christ is "to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."[1] The form of sacrifice is changed, though its essence remains. Sacrifice is not to be an external or ceremonial but it is to be an internal spiritual reality. In the chapters that follow, we will endeavour to see the influence of this New Testament teaching as it affected the material offerings of the people.

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1. Romans 12:1

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CHAPTER VIII

JESUS, HIS TEACHING AND EXAMPLE

Christian giving begins with a small circle of devout Jews, who believed that in Jesus of Nazereth God had spoken, and the hope of their race had been fulfilled. To their common religious inheritance - the practice, teaching and symbolism of the Temple and Synagogue - they added the new practice and teaching of their Master. These two things were crystalized in the lives of the early Christians by the experiences of Easter and Pentecost which gave the assurance of His continuing invisible presence, "working with them". Horton Davis writer:

> The only difference between Jewish Christians and their fellow countrymen was the fact that they believed the Messiah had come, while the rest waited for His coming in the future. Jewish Christians believed that Jesus Christ was the divine deliverer of Israel, foretold by the prophets, and were convinced that God had proved this conclusively by raising Jesus from the dead and by empowering the young Church with the Holy Spirit.[1]

The temple and the synagogue, with their liturgies, provided the natural background to the worship of the early Christians. Of real significance is the fact that the temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. The first Christian worship was simply a revised version of the worship of the synagogue.

Jesus and Paul were not antagonistic to the synagogue. Luke tells us that Jesus went to the synagogue "as his custom was", after the temptation in the wilderness (Luke 4:16). He performed miracles of healing there.[2] He spoke with graciousness and conviction in the synagogue.[3] Paul going about different cities visited first the synagogue to begin his work. In the Acts of the Apostles it is evident that every chance he had he preached the Word in the synagogues of Asia Minor.

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1. Horton Davis, Christian Worship, p. 19.
2. Matthew 12:9; Mark 1:23; Luke 13:10.
3. Luke 4: 18-27.

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What relationship does the worship of the synagogue have to the offering? Simply this, the worship of the synagogue was non-sacrificial in character. During the period of the exile the Synagogues provided worship that was second best to temple worship. In Jesus' time, all the Jews in Palestine tried to observe the three major festivals in Jerusalem, but the Synagogues which could be found in every town and village provided their only religious service.

A. D. 70 was an important date to both Judaism and Christianity. Because of the destruction of the Temple it marked the end of animal sacrifices, in which Jews and many Christians had participated. Paul argued for salvation by faith, and freedom from the ceremonial law, but nevertheless, went up to Jerusalem for the temple ceremonies whenever possible. With the destruction of the temple there was no longer a place where the animals might be sacrificed according to the Deuteronomic law. Jewish Christians and all other Jews had to readjust themselves to a new situation.[1]

The temple was supported by taxes provided by the Jews. It has been suggested that the tax was originated when Ezra issued a decree that one-third of a shekel should be paid annually (Neh. 10:32-34). This was increased to a half shekel in the period after Nehemiah, and became a part of the law of the Pentateuch (Exodus 30:11-16). By the time of Jesus this tax appears to have been accepted by Jews everywhere. The payment of this tax is reflected in the story about Jesus who sent Peter to get money from the mouth of a fish (Matthew 17:24-27). Apparently payment of the tax had been demanded by officials sent into Galilee for this purpose. Jesus did not refuse to pay the tax. He held the temple in high respect; his

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1. S. Vernon McCasland, "New Testament Times," article in The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 7, p. 96

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cleansing of it should prove that.

We learn easily by example and the example of Jesus' life is not to be denied in a consideration of giving to the church Jesus attended the synagogue and he paid the temple tax even though he implied that as the Son he was not obliged to do so. In his ministry, as he was followed by a large crowd he was confronted by a leper who wished to be healed. The leper did not doubt Christ's power: "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst...." Some scholars conjecture that in the actual event behind this account in Matthew 8:2-4 and Mark 1:40-45, the healing was not instantaneous but was expected to occur while the leper was on his way to the priest.[1] At any rate Jesus sent him to see the priest and to observe the law of purification. Jesus respected the function of the priest and the man could not be restored to an acceptable social status until he was publicly clean. The purification ceremony could only take place in Jerusalem. The gift commanded by Moses consisted of two birds, one of which was slain and the other released.[2]

The life of Jesus, in all its parts, has been considered as a life-giving act of sacrificial worship; an offering which redeems by "its perfect self-offering, all the faulty responses of men."[3] The cross is the culmination of the sacrifice. But seen in spiritual regard, its significance is revealed in the ongoing eternal self-offering in the heavenly places of One who was "named of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek."[4]

When we turn to His teaching, we find that the central demand of Jesus on those who would follow him is for a loving loyalty and faithful devotion to the point of self-denial. Indeed he challenges every life with

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1. Sherman E. Johnson, Exegesis on "Matthew," Interpreter's Bible, vol.7,p.338
2. Leviticus 14:4-7
3. Evelyn Underhill, Worship, p. 221
4. Hebrews 5:1-10.

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the law of sacrifice - the surrender of life that life may be received. The regular practice of sacrifice, almsgiving and fasting is not discredited. It is kept but raised to a high and costly level of sincerity.[1]

> The proposal that a man with a grudge should quit his worship, even to leaving his 'gift before the altar' is not any depreciation of worship; it is the exaltation of worship. For God sees the inmost motive, and must be worshipped in truth ..... and a heart harried by grudges cannot offer any wholeness of adoration."[2]

Jesus' Teaches about Almsgiving

The poor were supported by a tax which was supplemented by freewill offerings that were collected in the synagogue. Jesus had observed much of the giving that was ostentatious, and so he sounded a warning against such hypocrisy. To Jesus those who look for the crowd's approval of their giving, receive the crowd's reward which is hollow and empty; In the matter of giving alms, Jesus said "let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth."

Again let me repeat, the giving of an offering was not denied, it was raised or increased to include the whole individual. "Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven," was Jesus' word to the rich young man who stood at a turning point in world history. This statement indicates the total giving and also the self-sacrifice of the thing which may be standing between the soul and eternal life. A better illustration of this idea that all we have is what we are challenged to give, is seen in Jesus' commendation of the woman who gave two mites - all she had - for love's sake. The motive, the amount, and the goal we seek are all important in the estimation of Jesus.

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1. Matthew 5: 23-24; 6: 2-18
2. George Buttrick, Exposition on "Matthew," Interpreter's Bible, vol.7, p.296

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The Law and Giving

In Matthew's Gospel we have the words of Hosea "For I desired mercy and not sacrifice,"[1] repeated twice.[2] The giving of an offering as a sign of a worshipping heart is acceptable to God, but if that offering is a substitute for love and mercy then it is an offense. Jesus supported the prophet and raised the vision of the Christian from the law to the life of righteous love. This is the frequent dilemma for any Christian and his offering. Will he give the same as his neigbour,or a tithe or more than is required or expected?

Echoes of these words of Jesus are found in Matthew 23:23-24 where He is confronting with a stern warning those whom he feels are following the letter of the law but neglecting the weightier matters. "This verse is perhaps the earliest example in literature of the Jewish distinction between weightier and lighter commandments."[3] Jesus sees some of the scribes and Pharisees at their scales weighing out the mint and the dill and the cumminseed. They must be meticulously certain that they give God his tenth as laid down by the law. Jesus utters his warning, not because of their accurate legal practice, but because of their neglect and forgetfulness of the more important matters like justice, and mercy and faith. The comparison is between the greater and the lesser. He sees them as "blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel." In their eagerness to avoid a small impurity they are defiled by a larger one. This description can be used in our generations too. There are those who are meticulous in a narrow legalistic way but neglect more important matters.

The law can be used, Jesus suggests, to whitewash the external or

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1. Hosea 6:6
2. Matthew 9:13, 12:7,
3. George A. Buttrick, Exegesis on"St. Matthew" The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 7, p.536.

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the outside. But inside is the uncleanness of men's hearts and minds which needs to be kept in order too.

Matthew seems to be very concerned between the external and the internal, and he associates quite often the law with the external. Matthew makes much of Jesus' denunciation of public giving. Mark tells of Jesus' praise in public of the widow's act of giving two mites, but Matthew tells nothing of it because he has stated the great hyperbole that when you give you must not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. The two, external and the internal, should not be divorced.

Giving in the New Testament recognizes the proper place of the law, but through the important place given to the inner life, a radical shift in the position of the law is suggested. Whereas before a man stood in his sin striving to fulfill the demands of an impersonal legal code, now we are to stand with justice, mercy and faith in the presence of a living Lord who moves us to greater arenas of service.

The New Testament does not eliminate the law. We are to remember that giving is not to be motivated by the obligations placed upon us, but rather by the gratitude and faith that is within us. We give because of what Christ has done for us. The law helps us to see our motives. Robert Paul Roth illustrates this best by writing,

> The tithe as a fixed lue operates as a law for sinners; it convicts us of sin and at the same time becomes the occasion for the increase of sin. Sinners always either break the law or boast in it, and thereby in either case increase their sin. Either we fail to meet the tithe and are disgruntled because of it, or we meet it and become arrogant. Thus for some the tithe becomes a crushing burden and for others it becomes a comforting rationalization for their easy complacency."[1]

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1. Robert Paul Roth,"A Twentieth Century Conception of Christian Tithing," article in Stewardship in Contemporary Theology, p. 141

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Right Relationship and Giving

Reconciled relationship with our brother before we would make an offering is challengingly presented in Matthew 5:23, 24. Men are brothers because they are first children of God. Reference to sacrifice in this instance is only secondary to the lesson that Jesus is teaching. He is showing how the laws of the kingdom of God fulfill and then supersede the Mosaic law. In the Old Testament only, murder is deserving of death. But Jesus adds that anger and contempt and sneers that regard men as less than men are killers. The law sees the final act, but God sees the heart, the motive and the inner feelings, and God is to be worshipped in truth. Therefore giving with a grudge is not a pure act of adoration or confession or thanksgiving. In Mark 7:11, the relationship is not specifically that of between brothers but parents and children are included. In this instance Jesus is in dispute with some of the pharisees and scribes. He is in conflict with them for the substitution of mechanical regulations for the moral law. To the commandment of honouring parents, which involved the duty of supporting them, there was the exception, "If a man dedicates his property to the temple, he is absolved from supporting his parents." Jesus let it be clear that the concern for code and regulation was secondary to the vital currents of the soul, such as kindliness, mercy, tolerance and love. Nothing can save us from a code and regulations but an understanding and setting of priorities of material things over all human needs. The brother, the parent, the child, are all children of God and giving to God without recognition of the fact that on this earth we have been placed together to live together, makes the "word of God of none effect".

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The Widow's Gift to the Temple Treasury (Luke 21:1-4; Mark 12:41-44)

"And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury". "The Treasury", according to Frederick C. Grant,

> is apparently the hall named from the chest with a trumpet-shaped tube into which were dropped coins for the support of the temple worship; this was something like a church "poor box", as these offerings were purely voluntary, and perhaps not in very large amounts - though the rich cast in much"[1]

It was probably also a room in one of the porticoes of the Court of Women. The place may have been supervised by priests, and the donor had to declare the sum he was offering and the special ritual purpose for which it was intended.[2]

The value of the two mites (a farthing, a penny, two leptons - the smallest jewish coin in circulation), is given added significance when we are told that it was everything she had. She had no money left,not even for another meal. The rich were present too and from the scripture there is no suggestion of criticism, only the indication that they were generous. The point is made that they gave from their plenty - from the surplus. The story takes us from riches to poverty and the contrast is made of one whose giving sacrificed the operation costs, with those who gave from their surpluses. So Jesus makes the point that the gift which counts is the gift which costs. Of course David had taken this position generations previously when he said "I will not give to the Lord that which does cost me nothing".

We may see that true giving is to be measured according to what is left and not by its current value. The widow's gift however does more than

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1. F. C. Grant, Exegesis on "St. Mark," Interpreter's Bible, vol.7, p. 853
2. S. MacLean Gilmour. Exegesis on "Luke," Interpreter's Bible, vol. 8, p.359

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pass the test of this measure. It strikes a note in the human heart that breathes through hushed lips the awed whisper "sacrifice - real, sincere, extravagant agape!"

It is sacrificial generosity that has value in the sight of God. In this story we are reminded of God's measurements and man's. Man looks on the act but God looks on the heart. It is in the heart that giving is lifted from the physical to the realm of the spiritual. Upon the heart God gives full measure not according to our merit or worth. The blessing of His spirit is in its fullness and is there continually. "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God; for God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him." (John 3:34).

Stewardship

In the New Testament the word steward is used to describe a servant who has the responsibility for the property and business of his master. The Greek word "oikonomos", which occurs twenty times in the New Testament, originally meant a housekeeper, but the Revised Standard Version of the Bible gives the translated meaning of the word as steward.

Stewardship as a religious word refers to man's responsibility under God. God is the sovereign Creator who owns and rules over his creation. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein; for he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the rivers". (Ps. 24:1-2). God has further given man the things of creation as a trust - man as the chief creature is to subdue nature and rule over it. In the Old Testament God says to Adam "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the

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earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing "(Gen. 1:28).

In the new Testament, the doctrine of Creation is given depth when we consider Jesus Christ as Lord, as the one in whom our nature and destiny rest. In Jesus we see the acknowledgment of the absolute dependence of the creature upon the Creator. This principle is clear in the life and work of our Lord as he makes a full offering of his human nature to the Father.

Jesus' teaching would undermine the selfish man who says "I can do what I want with what is my own." In the matter of property, he calls for God to be put first. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven... For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also " (Matt. 6:19-21). "You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24) . Those who would be disciples of Jesus Christ are to take no thought about food, clothing and material possessions. "That is what pagans are always looking for." [1] The rich young ruler is challenged to sell all that he has and to give the sale returns to the poor and then to follow Jesus in order that he may do the things that complete God's will for his life.

In a series of parables in the Synoptic Gospels the teaching of Jesus concerning the disciple as steward is presented. These parables set the relationship of God and man alongside that of the householder and the servant who is in charge of the estate. Man is charged with the responsibility of administering the master's estate and is required to give an account of the things he has done.

In these parables man's freedom to manage his own affairs is challenged. Man has been placed in the world through the goodness of God and

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1. J. B. Phillips, translation, Matthew 6:32

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all the opportunities, talents and blessings are a trust from his creator. If man boasts of his position, advantage or gain,it is not a sign of man's autonomy but in all probability an expression of sin that separates him from God. Man is most truly himself when he sees himself as a creature of God and submits to the will of the Creator.

Secondly, these parables teach that man is in rebellion against God and his own future and this rebellion is manifested in the way in which man handles the things entrusted to him. He is restored to a right relationship with God through repentance. When man repents, the rebel is received again as a son, the slave is made a free man and the enemy is given the friendship of God.

These teachings also stress the necessity of being ready, of counting the cost, and of being diligent. The story of the ten virgins sounds a warning about being prepared. The rich fool was a good farmer, who looked after his crops and storage bins but was not ready to make his accounting to God. The unrighteous steward, who was a cheat, is set as an example of one who looked ahead and used all his energies to be ready for the events that were before him. Man must be prepared. To this must be added the need to be disciplined, to love one's neighbour and to forgive one's enemies. Discipline means uprooting the things that threaten loyalty to God and the maintaining of singleness of mind. Love of neighbour means acting toward those we meet who are in need, in the same manner as God acts toward man. To our forgiveness there is to be no limit, for we are forgiven as we have forgiven. Jesus' stress was always on the motive, the right attitude of gratitude to God and of helpfulness to one's fellowman. Jesus did not condemn the Pharisee's

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charities but he would have approved them had they been prompted by true motive. His two derogatory references to tithing are because the spirit of the tithers was wrong. The stewardship of time, talents and material possessions in gratitude to God and for the service of men is at the heart of Jesus' teaching about possessions.

In this regard it should be added that the thought or motive for reward is not a consideration. Modern emphasis on tithing has suggested that by tithing to the work of the Lord, the tither will receive in return more than he gives. "The minute I started my partnership with God, business boomed,"[1] is the testimony of the wealthy Mr. R. G. LeTourneau, and he is not the only one to suggest the thought that if we give the Lord his portion, then we will automatically be rewarded with spectacular material profits. Christians cannot reason this way. The test for a worthy standard of giving is not in the measurement of the material returns. Some instances may seem to prove it but others deny it. The true motivation in giving cannot be self-centred, nor with the thought or even desire of making personal gain. True motivation is seen in the desire to make a free-will offering of love and gratitude, sufficient to meet the need, in response to God's love revealed in Christ.

Through all of this I have tried to show that stewardship means much more than the presentation of our offerings, tithes and gifts to the church. Stewardship refers to the whole of life and its fundamental teachings have relevance to our habits and ways of giving. Georgia Harkness writes:

> This term (stewardship) is often understood too narrowly to mean personal giving, usually with an emphasis on tithing. That Christians ought to give of their material resources for the support of the Church and many worthy causes, for the extension of the gospel and the relief of human need, is indisputable. That this should be on the mathematical basis of the tithe is more open to question, not because this often indicates too much to give but because for those who are

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1. Raymond Jeffreys, God is My Landlord, p.140,

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> well-to-do it is too little. The amount of personal sacrifice involved in setting aside the tithe varies greatly from the one-thousand to the ten-thousand-dollar income, and still more as incomes go up.[1]

T. A. Kantonen sees stewardship as a way of life. He writes

> Stewardship as an all-embracing life attitude is nowhere more fully and accurately defined than in the "great and first commandment" in which our Lord sees the entire substance of the Law and the Prophets: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself"(Luke 10:27; Matt. 22: 37-40).[2]

Stewardship teaches about God's claim upon man's total existence. The motive for responding to that claim is love and the area in which the response is to be made is in our relations with our fellow man and in our worship of God. Consequently our giving has to represent more than dollars and cents. It has to have a depth to it. It has to have represented in it the whole of our being.

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1. Georgia Harkness, Christian Ethics, p. 145.

2. T. A. Kantonen, A Theology for Christian Stewardship, p. 45.

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CHAPTER IX

GIVING IN THE WORK AND TEACHING OF SAINT PAUL

Paul, the man from Tarsus was a Jew who in large measure bridged the gap between the Jews and Greeks that they both might belong to the one body of Christ. We will see in this chapter that the giving and receiving of gifts was one of the things that strengthened the bonds of this brotherhood.

Paul was by his own assertion, unalterably a Jew. Criticized by his enemies in Corinth, he wrote: "Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I." (II Cor.11:22) Writing to the Romans and the Galatians he declares that in all the world there is nowhere a more loyal Jew. He did not deny his origin, nor did he forget the faith of his fathers.

Paul was reared in a Greek city. When he quotes from the Old Testament scripture it is not from the Hebrew but rather from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. He was familiar with Greek literature but referred to it very seldom. He could have got along easily with the Jews but he felt his mission was to the Greeks. "If there was one thing of which Paul was certain, it was that his unique privilege was to be the apostle to the Gentiles".[1] Born in historic Tarsus, Paul claimed Roman citizenship. On more than one occasion his claim to this privilege was the means by which he was given freedom, protection and safe-conduct. We are not certain how he received this citizenship but we know that he used it and was proud of it.

In Paul was a man best fitted to bring the Christian way of life and giving to the Gentiles. Barclay writes:

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1. William Barclay, The Mind of St. Paul, p. 20

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> In order that Christianity might go out to all the world a unique person was necessary.....and Paul was that person. Here uniquely was the man of two worlds, the man who was Jewish to the last fibre of his being, but also the man who knew the Romans and the Greeks as few Jews knew them. Here indeed was the man prepared by God to be the bridge between two worlds, and to be the bridge by which the Gentiles might come to God.[1]

The Grace of Giving

One cannot consider Paul without saying something about grace. Man is weak and sinful and it is by God's grace that he is saved. Also in II Corinthians, Chapter 8, St. Paul declares thatgiving is a grace and the generous givings of the Macedonians, beyond their means, was proof that God's grace was with them.

The word "grace" is translated from the Greek word "charis", which can mean beauty, loveliness, attractiveness or charm. But the word 'grace' also has the suggestion of a gift which is given freely and without deserving. Grace cannot be earned, it can only be humbly and gratefully received. The fundamental meaning of grace is that of a gift, given freely out of the generosity of the individual's heart.

Let us look for a moment on the relationship between law and grace in Christian giving. When Paul developed his ideas about grace he was going contrary to Orthodox Jewish teaching. Through the law the Jew was able to acquire merit in the sight of God. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly" (Psalm 1:1). This Psalm and others are a reflection on the legalistic idea of religion. We have to be fair and recognize that in its highest and most devotional moments Jewish faith did acknowledge that man did rest ultimately on God's mercy, but its overall practice and manifestation was that man could earn merit in the sight of God.

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1. William Barclay, The Mind of St. Paul, p. 31

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Paul opposed this idea when he wrote about grace. "By works of the law shall no one be justified" (Gal. 2:16). Grace means that no man can even earn a thing in the sight of God - all man can do is humbly receive those things which God freely and generously gives.

In all the letters written by Paul the notes of grace are sounded. He remembered probably with regret the life he had led and he would think of the work that was given to him to do and the only way he could account for it was by grace. He knew how the persecutor from Tarsus had become the apostle and only grace could account for the transformation. Daily he could see what grace could do for those who became new men in Christ.

It is God who initiates all things. Paul equates the grace of God and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.[1] In this divine initiative the attitude of God is to bestow his grace on all men. Jesus Christ himself was a living example of God's love to all men. Forgiveness of man's sin is an act of God;s grace, given freely and unmerited.

What then is the relationship of this to the presentation of the offering? Simply this that a man's giving will gain him no credit in the sight of God. The idea of grace and giving to receive salvation or merit in God's sight are in opposition to each other. If one's giving gains God's favour, then there is no need for God's grace. If salvation is by grace, then giving makes no difference. Paul writes of the saved, "But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace." (Romans 11:6). We cannot set out to find our salvation by giving and then talk about grace. Each of these principles exempts the other.

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1. c.f. I Cor. 1:4; Gal.2:21; Phil.4:23, Gal.6:18, Romans 16:24

The Galatians took the position that grace has to be supported by the acceptance of circumcision and the acceptance of the law. To which Paul replied in Gal. 2:21 that if a man can be saved by the careful observance of the law, then the death of Christ was a preposterous blunder and His sacrifice was not necessary.

For Paul, everything is the generous gift of God. He made it clear that his whole personal life, his place and purpose in God's will was bound up in grace. He felt that he was an apostle by the grace of God. It was by God's grace that he laid the foundations for the faith of the Corinthians, that he speaks to the Romans, that he is accepted by the leaders of the Church.[1]

It is evident then that the presentation of the offering is because of the grace of God. In fact Paul cites the giving of the Macedonians as proof that God's grace was with them. Their generosity was an example of the grace of God at work. (II Cor. 8:7). The great qualities of the Christian life are called the fruit of the spirit which Paul equates with the fruit of grace. What is the relation of works with salvation? Paul suggests that grace places an obligation on man or prompts a response in the heart of man. William Barclay writes:

> A man is saved by grace. What is the result of that? The result is that it lays upon a man the tremendous obligation to spend his life showing that the grace was not expended on him in vain. In grace there has reached out to him the love of God; he must therefore be filled with the unutterable longing and the burning desire to show himself, by the help of that grace, worthy of that grace. This is out of the sphere of law altogether; this is no legal obligation; it is not a case of doing good and being good, because the opposite would entail some legal penalty and punishment; it is a case of doing good and being good, because a man cannot bear to disappoint the love which has loved him so.[2]

Paul was aware that the Christian life was not a simple and

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1. c.f. Gal. 2:9; 2 Cor 1:12, I Cor 3:10; Eph 3:8; Gal. 1:15.
2. William Barclay, The Mind of St. Paul, p. 170

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spontaneous thing. A. M. Hunter writes that,

> Paul saw the good life as both gift and task. God, having set a man right with himself and endowed him with the spirit, then requires him to live as a new man should. He is to become, by divine grace, what he potentially is. If God is at work in him for his salvation, he is also summoned to work it out for himself.[1]

Laws can point men to the ways of giving, but they cannot make men give. What laws cannot do is to break the power of selfish greed in the heart of man. What is needed is the teaching and receiving of a new principle that will overcome the old nature, and produce the "new man in Christ". Christian giving then as now, becomes the natural, inevitable outpouring of it in moral thought and action.

When we consider grace and giving we have to deal with motive. As we have seen, Paul denies the motive which has man believe he can earn salvation. When we accept Paul's teaching on grace, the motive for giving is that of generosity. Grace so amazing, so divine, motivates one to give all of himself in gratitude. "What have you that you did not receive?" (ICor. 4:7) St. Paul asked the Christians in Corinth. Since we have received everything, how must we live? In the eighth and ninth chapters of II Corinthians Paul gives us to understand that the underlying motive for Christian giving is out of gratitude to God. Because of this motive of gratitude to God, Paul asked the Corinthians to give "not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loveth a cheerful giver". (II Cor. 9:7). When a man comes to understand completely in his mind and heart that God is redeeming him by his grace, he will show forth His praise, not only with his life, but in his life by giving in God's service and by walking before Him in holiness and righteousness all the days of his life.

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1. A. M. Hunter, Interpreting Paul's Gospel, p. 115

> In her drama, the ZEAL OF THY HOUSE, the late Dorothy L. Sayers pictures the central figure of the play, William of Sens, the architect and craftsman in the re-building of Caterbury Cathedral, as a man of strong will. As the work progressed William became filled with self-confidence. The praise of men abetted his pride. Later on, because of an accident and consequent suffering and disappointment, he lost his arrogance and, by the divine alchemy of grace, he became a transformed person. He found in Christ the source of wisdom and life. He felt he was now indebted to the Saviour for a love surpassing knowledge. Near the end of the play we find William, now a humble soul, saying these words which a Christian steward would re-echo in every generation:
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> "To all of you I owe a debt of love
> Which I will pay with love. Only to God,
> That royal creditor, no debt remains.
> He from the treasure of His great heart hath paid
> The whole sum due, and cancelled out the bond."[1]

Stewardship and the Offering in Paul's Teaching

We will be dealing with the narrow meaning of stewardship as mentioned in the section on stewardship in the Chapter on "Jesus, His Teaching and Example." This narrow meaning of stewardship has to do with money and more particularly with the money offerings to the Church.

Paul, appealing for the poor Christians in Jerusalem, outlines the characteristics of Christian giving. In I Cor.16:2, Christian giving is to be personal, systematic and proportionate and in II Corinthians, Chapters 8 and 9, the qualities listed are personal, systematic, proportionate, voluntary, a trust from God, to be used in service, from a motive of gratitude.

Dr. G. Preston MacLeod, using this frame of reference makes this study on these chapters:

> The meaning of this great passage is enriched for the reader and teacher by identifying the repeated references to one or other of these characteristics of a Christian offering. The following are contained in chapter eight. The Churches of Macedonia

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1. Article by Rev. R. C. Chalmers, God the Son and the Stewardship of Faith at the 1960 Stewardship School at Mount Allison University, Sackville, N. B.

have shown that "their abundance of joy" has overflowed in a wealth of liberality"(voluntary); "they gave according to their means" (proportionate) "and beyond their means, of their own free will" (voluntary) "but first they gave themselves to the Lord" (a trust, gratitude). To the Corinthians Paul continues, "I say this not as a command but to prove ... that your love also is genuine" (voluntary). "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (gratitude). "For if the readiness is there (voluntary), it is acceptable according to what a man has, not according to what he has not" (proportionate). "Your abundance at the present time should supply their want." (service)

Chapter nine goes on: " I know your readiness" (2)" ...that it may be ready not as an exaction but as a willing gift" (5) voluntary); "he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully" (6) (proportionate). "Each one must do as he has made up his mind" (personal), "not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (7) (voluntary). "And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything (a trust) and may provide in abundance for every good work" (8) Service. "You will be enriched in every way for great generosity" (II) (voluntary service; "for the rendering of this service not only provides for the wants of the saints (service) but also overflows in many thanksgivings to God" (12) (gratitude). "Under the test of this service you will glorify God by your obedience in acknowledging the gospel of Christ (a trust) and by the generosity of your contribution for them and for others" (13) (service). "Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!" (15) (gratitude). The whole passage, like a peal of bells, rings the changes on the repeated notes and qualities of giving, up and down the whole scale of Christian stewardship."[1]

Paul warns about false attitudes toward money. He is opposed to those who promoted the idea that godliness is a means of gain (I Timothy 6). There is a group of Christians who are sure that their prosperity is a sign of their righteousness and goodness, but there are some not successful in the eyes of the world who are in right relationship with God, and there are some who are wealthy and receive the accolade of the world but whose wealth has been gained by the sacrifice of principles and human values. Paul is dealing with motives. Maybe he was referring to religious teachers whose

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1. Dr. G. Preston MacLeod, The Spiritual Basis of Stewardship, 1960 Sector School Stewardship Lectures, United Church Publishing House, Toronto, 1960.

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minds are on fees rather than service. Paul had no patience with those who think of Christian discipleship primarily as a way of gain.

By the same argument, he would not approve of those who practice giving in order that they will receive gain. Tithing that results in spectacular financial profits may be the experience of Mr. R. G. LeTourneau[1] but it is not the hope held forth to Jesus' disciples, nor does it have the sanction of St. Paul. This is not the way to test a worthy standard of giving, nor is it the way a generous way of giving is determined by God's law to work out.

Paul protects the right of those who preach the gospel to live of the gospel. In I Cor.9:14 he makes the point that "the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel". Paul did not always exercise this right. He avoided having the criticism levelled at him that he preached for money.

Paul also made the point that Jesus makes, that each family is responsible for its own members before giving to charity. He tells Timothy that children or grandchildren should first learn their duty to their parents and make some returns to them, for this is acceptable in the sight of God (I Tim. 5:4). Paul does not wish the church to be burdened with the care of those who can be supported by their own efforts or by members of their immediate family.

While Paul sounds a warning against wrong attitudes toward money, he does not deny that we are dependent on it as a medium of exchange with

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1. Raymond Jeffreys, God is My Landlord, p. 141

which we can obtain the necessities of life. Paul would not approve of the money-mad craze that some get caught up with. He spoke of being content. Such contentment does not depend on treasures gathered up, or gifts given or withheld. It depends more upon right motive, and the heart being in love with God.

Concerning those with wealth and property, Paul asks Timothy to charge the rich that they are to be humble, trust God and do good (I Tim. 6: 17-19). He is reiterating his conviction that the things of this world are transitory and are the gifts of God who has given us these things to enjoy. Material possessions are to be judged by the use made of them, and by the extent that they are made to serve the spiritual life which is eternal.

Paul made it clear that he had little sympathy with the spectacular exhibition of giving. Christian giving (I Cor. 14) must not lose the notes of happy, grateful expression and adoration. No giving can be an example without it. He tells the Romans to be simple and sincere in their generosity (Rom. 12:8). In other words it is possible that the individual who gives may do so in such a way as to make his gifts a mockery and from a wrong motive.

The Collection for the Destitute Christians in Jerusalem

Obtaining offerings for the church at Jerusalem took up considerable time and work on the part of Paul. This was not a new idea, because the Jews of the Dispersion had sent contributions to their poor brethren in Palestine. The earliest mention made to this matter is with regard to the Churches of Galatia to give alms to their brethren in Judea (Gal. 2:10). Bishop Lightfoot thinks, not without reason, that these churches did not respond generously to this appeal.[1] No reference is made to the gifts of the Galatian churches

1. J. B. Lightfoot, St. Paul's Epistle to the Phillipians, p.243

except in this one place. From Acts 11: 27-30 it appears that early in his ministry the church at Antioch sent him as a delegate to Jerusalem to take famine relief to the poverty-stricken church. (Acts 11: 27-30). It would appear that this may have been a threat to the influence and position of the church at Jerusalem. Indeed this event has been challenged and questioned on the basis of whether Paul actually made this trip to Jerusalem. Solutions suggested include the thought that Paul couldn't come but Barnabas came alone. Description of this visit corresponds to a description of a visit in Acts 15. It is possible that both these descriptions are of the one visit - a visit that reflected the generosity of the church at Antioch, and secondly that revealed the question in the mind of the Jerusalem church, of the legitimacy of Gentile Christianity. This problem is reflected in the study of C. H. Dodd, who writes:

> Either on that occasion or later, he (Paul) had made a 'gentleman's agreement' with Peter, James and John, whereby he was to be free to conduct his mission to the Gentiles without interference from the headquarters of Jewish Christianity. In return, the 'pillars' of the Church stipulated that he should 'remember the poor' - in other words, that he should undertake to raise funds for the support of the impoverished community at Jerusalem."[1]

The evidence suggests to me that Paul made one or two efforts at obtaining aid for the church at Jerusalem. The relief from Antioch mentioned in Acts 11:27-30 may not have been initiated by the Apostle Paul. There had been a crop failure in the southern part of Palestine and the people were suffering from a lack of food. The new Christian Church at Antioch heard of the need in Jerusalem and out of their concern, they felt it their responsibility to send assistance to their brothers in Christ down in Jerusalem. They wanted to be sure that their help arrived, so they chose two leaders.

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1. C. H. Dodd, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, p. 229

of the Church, Paul and Barnabas, and to them they entrusted the first relief fund for Christians.

Some suggest that it is practical and wise to send help to those who are hungry for where we find areas of starvation and poverty we find a seedbed of discontent, violence and revolution. Therefore we protect ourselves by feeding them. This may be true but the new Christians at Antioch were letting the teachings of Jesus crystalize in their experience. Jesus had commanded his followers to go into the world and give cups of cold water, to feed the hungry, to heal the sick, to clothe the naked and to give relief to those in distress. Out of their abundance they gave to those in need because it was the Christlike thing to do. Paul was probably just beginning to find his mission and purpose in the Church.

After the Council at Jerusalem, the gathering of a great offering for the destitute at Jerusalem was one of Paul's constant concerns. As we have seen in the section on Stewardship, it is from his instructions to the Corinthians that he outlines so well the underlying principles of giving.

The causes of the poverty of these Jewish Christians are not given. Augustine suggested that the poverty at Jerusalem was the result of the community of goods (Acts 4:32), a view that is still held and may be part of the explanation. Communism, without careful planning, leadership and organization of labour, can end in disaster. There were other causes to be considered. Jerusalem had a pauperized population, which depended on the regular influx of visitors - therefore most of the converts were poor from the beginning. Who can say whether or not they were persecuted and boycotted by the unconverted Jews? The faith that "the Lord was at hand" (I Cor.16:22)

may have checked industry at Jerusalem as it did at Thessalonica. (II Thess. 3:10). Principal Edwards adds this:

> From the expression in Romans 15: 26, we may infer that all the members of the Church were not poor. It is not, therefore, true to say that the Jewish Christians were at this time Ebionites. To say the least, only some of them were bound by a vow of poverty; and it is not likely the Gentile Churches would give alms to maintain the practice of religious poverty.[1]

In discussing the method, Paul strikes a note that will help to settle the weekly day of worship. He does not refer to it as "the Lord's day," but the first day of the week, the day when the Lord rose from the dead, and when Christians joyfully broke bread together. It is soon after this that we find the practice of receiving collections for the poor being received at the eucharist, as part of the offering given to the Lord.

Another interesting point is made by Marcus Dods who states: "Paul saw in this collection for the poor an opportunity for bringing more closely together, the two great parties of the Church - Gentiles and Jews.[2] Quite likely he saw that no theological or logical treatise would be as fruitful in kindly feeling, good will and sense of unity as this simple expression of brotherly kindness. "Perhaps his chief aim was to strengthen the ties which bound the Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians together".[3]

In II Corinthians, Chapters eight and nine, Paul gives more encouragement to give for the needy in Jerusalem. He challenges them by citing the example of the churches of Macedonia, which would include Philippi, Thessalonica and Berœa. The churches of Macedonia had come through difficult times. They had been persecuted for their faith. Rome had by taxation

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1. Thomas Charles Edwards, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, p. 402
2. Marcus Dods, The Expositors Bible, I Corinthians, p. 389
3. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, International Critical Commentary, I Corinthians, p. 230.

taken most of its natural resources of timber and minerals. Paul makes the point that God at work in these people's hearts inspired these people to give beyond their means to a high level of sacrificial giving. How much was given, Paul does not say, but he seeks to arouse in the Corinthians a similar spirit of generosity. These people had given to the point of sacrifice, the point where their giving meant they went without.

It is significant that Paul makes the point that before the Macedonians gave, "they gave themselves to the Lord." The generous heart is rooted in the consecrated spirit. Selfishness in the face of human need is the symptom of an incompletely surrendered life. An appeal for help may raise the question of a man's loyalty. Jesus challenged people with decision when he told them to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness (Matt. 6:24-33). Such consecration means that in our giving there is truly something of ourselves. Giving can be cold and cruel. To give ourselves with our gift is what raises giving to high level of effectiveness and spiritual fulfillment. "Who gives himself with his alms feeds three, Himself, his hungering neighbour and me".[1]

Love cannot be ordered, it can only be given and received. Paul wanted the money for the poor saints in Jerusalem. But more than the money, he wanted them to grow in the graces of Christian character. In II Corinthians 8:8, he tells the Corinthians that he is not ordering them, but only prompting the latent liberality that is in them, by telling them what others have done.

In verse 9, Paul appeals to the supreme motive. On this motive he rests his case. His plea is to their knowledge of the grace of Christ, "that

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1. James Russel Lowell, The Vision of Sir Launfal, Part 2, St. 8, quoted in Interpreter's Bible, vol. 10, p. 367.

though he was rich, yet for your sake be became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich." It is so easy to appeal to wrong motives, like self-interest, pride or reputation. Paul's appeal was to the highest motives, loyalty to Christ, and gratitude for what the Master had done. No Christian can ever say that he had saved himself. He can only live in gratitude for his salvation.

Completing an unfinished undertaking is another point that Paul uses to encourage them to give. The evidence suggests that some time before Paul writes his letter, the Christians of Corinth had agreed on their own initiative, to contribute to this fund. How often individuals are motivated to give but for one reason or another the gift is never given. An appeal on television moves one to realize the need to fight cancer, but envelopes, a stamp and a cheque are not handy, and so the money is never received. The Corinthians were no different from us when it came to prolonging a financial undertaking. It is generally at this point that spiritual growth is slowed down too.

For some reason Paul is reluctant to take the offering for the poor to Jerusalem. Reading between the lines in I Cor. 16:3-4 one can sense that there is something on Paul's mind. A year and a half later he writes to the Romans and states he definitely must go (Rom. 15:25). He asks the prayers of the Romans that he may not be harmed by the unbelievers of Judea. His fears are justified. In Acts 21, 27 ff is the account of what happened when he went to Jerusalem. There is some reason to believe that Paul's hopes for what this offering might accomplish for the Jewish and Gentile Christians, were not realized.

From Paul's point of view it mattered tremendously that the offering should not only be accepted but also that it be accepted as having a certain significance. There can be no doubt at all as to what that significance was. Paul hopes the gift will have the effect of closing the serious and disastrous rift between Jerusalem and the Gentile Churches (or at any rate between Jerusalem and his own Gentile churches). Only if the collection is so received as to have this effect will be be able to COME TO (ROME) WITH JOY.[1]

.....His coming, even so, may well have been in the fullness of the blessing of Christ (vs. 29), but it was not with the joy which he had anticipated. (vs. 32).

As a matter of fact, everything went wrong (Acts 21). James was guardedly friendly, but rattled by the aggressive attitude of 'tens of thousands' (so he said) of Jewish Christians incensed against Paul and all his works. He persuaded Paul ...or, rather ordered him... to make a demonstration of his faithfulness to the traditional ceremonies of the Jewish religion. Paul, ready to do anything to disarm prejudice, complied. Whether the effect upon the Christian Jews would have made any difference to their attitude we cannot say. For the non-Christian Jews took matters into their own hands. The presence of the Ephesian delegates in the city was made a pretext for a charge of defiling the Temple. Paul was nearly lynched, rescued by the Roman guard, and ultimately sent to Rome as a prisoner. The course of history, therefore, has given a deep colour of tragic irony to this section of the letter. The man who writes to Rome, full of far-reaching schemes, who is planning to visit the capital on his way to remoter fields of enterprise, was brought to Rome worn by years of imprisonment, in chains, his hopes disappointed, his active career at an end.[2]

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1. John Knox, Exegesis on the Epistle to the Romans, Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 9, p. 649.
2. C. H. Dodd, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, p. 233

CHAPTER X

THE OFFERING IN THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

Giving in the early periods of the Church was prompted by three fundamental motives. The first was the response of the individual in gratitude to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ - "We love because he first loved us". The second kind of giving was from a desire to secure one's salvation - "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul." The third way of giving was on the basis of the compelling authority of ecclesiastical and civil law. This latter form of giving will receive no consideration since it is not found to any great extent until after the conversion of the Emperor, Constantine.

The nature of Christian giving becomes more clear in the light of Pentecost. The keynote of Pentecost is fulfilment. Fulfilled are the prophecies of old; fulfilled is the saving purpose of God which Christ came to carry out. Because of his victory, the power of a new creation flows into the world, and a new age has begun under his lordship. This was the substance of Peter's sermon on Pentecost.

> Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear.....God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified (Acts 2:33-36).

Jesus lives and reigns, is the apostolic witness. The spirit does not replace Jesus. He leads men to experience Christ as a living reality. Through the Holy Spirit the Christian is led into the presence of the living Christ and a genuine personal commitment to Christ must take place. Then the giving becomes a partnership and the giver says"I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Pentecost, the day on which the Church celebrates its birthday, was a day marked by a new experience of giving. The spirit that gave to the first Christians a new life in Christ also united their giving in common concern and love for one another. "All who believed were together and had all things in common.....The company of those who believed were of one heart and soul " (Acts 2:44, 4:32). The doctrine of the Spirit reminds us that in terms of Christian faith and giving, the initiative belongs to God, and that what we do is a response to what he has done.

This fellowship of people sharing the same ideas (the teachings of Jesus) and following the same practices (the breaking of bread) were also living by the same economic rights and responsibilities. They were full of the thought that the second coming of Jesus was not far distant. Because of this they were willing to sell their property as the need arose and then to distribute the funds to all men, as each man had need.

> All this was done withvjoy and gladness. There was nothing drab about it. They did eat their meat with gladness. No wonder, for there is nothing that gives greater joy to a man than the sense of belonging to a community, the life of which he shares. Scores of men, drafted into military service, find for the first time in their lives, even under the pressure of combat, the joy of living in close asocition with those whose lives are bound up with theirs. How much more the joy of a man who lives as a member of the community that centers in Christ Jesus![1]

"....According as any man had need " (Acts 2:44). This statement would lead us to raise the question as to whether or not they sold everything and then gave until they were penniless? It would appear that the first converts probably kept their homes and those things that were absolutely needful for themselves, but the rest of their property they held as a trust for the church to be used whenever and wherever the needs of the brethren were seen to exist. This expression of community concern is an earlier stage than that in which money was brought and given for the use of the apostles.

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1. Theodore P. Ferris, Exposition on the"Acts of the Apostles", Interpreter's Bible, vol. 9, p. 51.

"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship....(Acts 2:42). The word for fellowship in the Greek is KOIVWVIA. It is used by Paul to describe the unity of the believers with each other and with their Lord. Its equivalent in the Aramaic (habhurâ') is used to describe a group of individuals sharing a common life, but more particularly those who come together to share the common Passover meal. Jesus shared a common life with his disciples and perhaps the communal life of Jerusalem was only an extension of that practice.

Another meaning of the word KOIVWVIA has to do with "almsgiving" or"relief". In the meaning of this passage then this word would give further support to the idea that the characteristic of their fellowship was a group of people who not necessarily lived in a communal compound, but who were brought together by the fact that they shared their goods for the benefit of those in need. This may be labouring the word KOIVWVIA but nevertheless the point is worthy of our consideration.

"The breaking of bread" is a phrase found in Acts 2:42 and then in verse 46. In the first verse this phrase is mentioned with teaching and prayers indicating that the practice may have a religious significance. Indeed it calls to mind the last supper of Jesus with his disciples. In the second reference the practice takes place in the homes, and those coming are not just participating in a ceremonial act but they are actually having a complete meal. Indeed it is evident that this meal was the chief means of subsistence for the poor members of the community. At this point we can see that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was associated with that of a common meal. They became disassociated in later years because of abuses of the common meal. Those coming were eating unworthily and becoming drunk and disorderly. Further evi-

dence in the Church at Corinth was that the wealthy were coming and eating without consideration for the needs of the poorer brethren. Paul then initiated the separtion of the Supper from the common meal - the Eucharist being differentiated from the agate.

In Acts 4:32, 5:11 we have a second description of this early community of the church. Both passages mention the community use of goods, which was carried out not by compulsion but as a free-will voluntary means of meeting the common needs.

Two illustrations of giving in this early situation are given. Barnabas originally named Joseph, is introduced to the church as a helper. He must have been a strong personality and a prominent figure in Hellenistic Jewish-Christian circles. This "Son of encouragement" lived up to his name by selling a field and bringing the money for distribution by the apostles. No further comment is made and we are left to surmise that his giving was acceptable. Ananias did the same thing, except that he quietly, with his wife's knowledge, kept back a portion of the money which he received for his property. He was not judged and punished for holding back some of his money, but he cheated. In the eyes of the public they were generous givers but in the eyes of the Holy Spirit they were hypocrites - they wanted to appear to be zealous supporters of the church, but in reality they were looking after themselves. When their true behaviour was discovered, shocked with a sense of their own guilt, they dropped dead. How they died is not important. The description may be a story used to teach that none in the community can deceive the Holy Spirit who watches over the community. Other teaching points included the objection to hypocrisy, which Jesus considered in the pharisees, and also the love of money being the root of all evil. Whether the couple

actually lived or died they were cut off from the group by their own actions and for all intents and purposes their relationship with the group was killed. They had not played the game fairly.

J. Rawson Lumby makes this comment:

> Each felt that he held his possessions only as a trust, and if occasion called for it, they were to be given up. Such love to one another, Jesus had foretold, should be a mark of his disciples. (John 13:35.)
>
> All those who have sketched a perfect society, as Plato in his Republic, and Sir Thos. Moore in his Utopia, have placed among their regulations this kind of community of goods which was established by the first Christians. In theory it is the perfection of a commonwealth, but there is need of perfection in the citizens before it can be realized. There can be no question that an expectation of Christ's immediate return from Heaven, acting along with the unity of thoughts and feeling, made these men willing to part with their possessions and goods, there being, as we shall see from the case of Ananias, no constraint upon them to do so.
>
> ....The portions kept back was probably not large, for otherwise the general sense of the value of the land would have made it conspicuous.
>
> The offence was an aggravated one, and had not been committed without deliberation and set purpose. Sapphira was a willing accomplice in the intended fraud.
>
> There seems to have been no necessity to give at all to the common fund unless a man felt he could well afford to do so, nor to give all that he either had or realized by any sale, provided only he made honest declaration of what his gift really was.[1]

The church at Jerusalem had made a false step in allowing its members to believe that Jesus would return immediately in physical form to claim the world for His own. Business life and activity were paralysed. In the light of modern day Communism, one wonders was their resulting poverty brought on by the acceptance of community support? Did this cause the loss of individual self-respect and initiative and bring about more dependence on the Churches outside of Jerusalem by the Church in Jerusalem? Why did the Churches of Ephesus, Philippi and Corinth have to send help to Jerusalem? There was an influx of widows and orphans, but "when men get into the habit of living upon

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1. J. Rawson Lumby, Acts of Apostles, Cambridge 1914, p's.51,54 and 55.

alms it is very difficult to restore the habits of healthy independence." [1]

The Appointment of Stewards

As the Christian community increased, new situations which had not been anticipated developed. One of the emergencies had to do with the question of administering relief. Just as their Jewish fathers had taken their social responsibilities seriously, so did the early church. With the growth of the church the work of teaching and preaching increased and we are told that the relief work was neglected (Acts 6:1-3). Complaints were heard from the neglected widows. Seven men were appointed to take care of this problem. New developments require new plans, new organizations, new methods and new men. One of the new men introduced at this time to the church was Stephen.

We are not certain to what "the daily distribution" refers. It probably had something to do with the public assistance which was given by means of the agape or common meal (Acts 6:1). The widows without legal protection found it particularly difficult to obtain even a meager living. Later it seems, the widows became a recognized body with their names on a roll (I Tim. 5:9). This was not a large group as there were strict limitations: 1. They had to be sixty years or older; 2. they must be committed to life service; 3. and they had to be of good character. We usually think that "tables" refers to the dining tables, but it is suggested that maybe the meaning is the money-changers' table from which came the general financial administration of the community. At any rate it is in this incident that we see the beginning of organized methods for looking after the distribution of the gifts of the early church.

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1. G. F. Stokes, The Expositor's Bible, vol. 1, p. 196 ff, A. C. Armstrong & Sons, N. Y. 1901,

The practice of giving in the early church was inspired by the teaching of Jesus as outlined previously. It also grew out of the practical demands and needs of the community. In the first century of the Christian Church, giving was for the relief of the sick and the poor, which we have discussed at some length. Funds were also used for the support of the apostles and also to cover the expenses incurred at public meetings.

CONCLUSION

Any inquiry into a given religious practice obligates a Christian to study the Scriptures carefully for their precise teaching with regard to the subject in question. This thesis has been a study of the offering and the Bible has yielded a volume of material that has not always been easy to study or understand but which has nevertheless created an appreciation of the growth and development of the spiritual foundations which undergird the presentation of the offering in Christian worship.

If we were to review all examples of offerings made to God we could see that they have a twofold quality. As practised they have an "outside and an inside"; a visible act and an invisible motive, both real, both needed and both closely interdependent. Either extreme of these two qualities would impoverish the total act. As we have followed the history of the offering we have seen the influence of groups who aggressively supported one side or the other. Under the leadership of the priests the sacrifices became elaborate, complex acts of worship and while they did not abolish the motivation underlying the sacrificial system, nevertheless their concern was exaggerated for the external and observable aspects of the system. The high ideals of the prophets represented the efforts made to reinstate the extreme of inner experience. They condemned the superficial practices and favoured the expression of the sentiments of the soul in terms of the spiritual values of faith, mercy, justice and humility. The movement between outer and inner has continued to the present day. Among the Protestant churches there are those whose worship follows prescribed

ritual patterns and then there are those whose worship is free and spontaneous, because of their emphasis upon the "religion of the heart." It must not be felt that there is an absolute division between the outward and the inner, the visible and the invisible. It would be better to understand that there is some of both in every offering. Human love is truly expressed in spontaneous gifts. So too man's love for God reveals itself in material offerings.

The offering has to be understood in its relation to the belief which is held by the individual. Primitive man believed that the deities could be approached and that their goodwill could be obtained. Therefore they offered gifts to them. Christians believe that God's favour cannot be obtained by making an offering. Their offerings are made in grateful response to what God has already done for men. This is why there is discussion and material in abundance on the subject of the theology of stewardship.

Associated with primitive man's first offerings were motives that are questioned by Christian people. Offerings were made out of self-interest or fear. In the New Testament Jesus was concerned primarily with the motive behind the gift. Motivation for the Christian offering cannot be self-centred nor can there be a desire or thought of personal gain. The true motive is expressed by the desire to make a free-will offering of love and gratitude in response to God's love in Christ. However, Jesus' commendation "of giving all for love's sake" should not lead us to the false conclusion that men's motives in giving improved progressively from primitive times until the Christian period. The meaning of sacrifice in its higher

forms as discussed in the Old Testament has shown that

> sacrifice is a freewill offering, a humble gesture which embodies and expresses with more or less completeness the living heart of religion; the self-giving of the creature to its God.[1]

The Temple liturgy in the pre-Christian period was not a primitive blood-thirsty performance, but at its best it was a dramatic act of worship embodying the complex devotional response of people seeking right relationship with God. Each offering which was sacrificed symbolized some aspect of the religious experience of faithful people. Indeed it is not surprising that the writer of Revelation found here so much material for his picture of the ceaseless worship of heaven. The synagogue played its part in supporting this worship and yet the synagogue must have assisted the early Christian church in its dissociation from the sacrificial system. The teaching of the Synagogue supported the underlying basic principles for the sacrificial system but in fostering worship apart from sacrifice the precedent was set for early Jewish Christians to follow.The influence of the Jewish Synagogue on the development of Christian worship probably has been greater than that of any other single factor. In the transition to Christian worship the material gift decreased in priority and becomes only part of the total offering which Christians make. The doctrine of the Atonement is developed in the Old Testament where the view is held that men may approach God and find reconciliation through a sacrificial offering. In the New Testament the point is made that Christ's suffering and death was a sacrifice whereby mankind is reconciled with God. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us". (Rom. 5:8.) Objection is raised to this by those who maintain that God

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1. Evelyn Underhill, Worship, p.48 .

neither requires nor desires a sacrificial offering. From the study of Jesus' attitude to his suffering and His death, of the teaching in the Epistles and also from the testimony of Christian experience regarding penitence, forgiveness and fellowship with God, I find myself confirmed in the faith that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." The view that Christ's life and death was a sacrifice acceptable in the sight of God, was not original to the New Testament. Such an offering was suggested many times in the Old Testament. In Isaiah 52: 13-53, the Servant is said to give his life as a guilt-offering. Therefore the conclusion must be drawn that God's redemptive work of reconciling man unto Himself through Jesus Christ has been going on throughout all history.

The "total self-offering of Jesus in obedience to the Father's will" becomes the example for the disciples of Jesus to follow when they make an offering. Giving has to be represented by more than dollars and cents. It has to have depth to it. It has to have represented in it the whole of our being. This position is supported by the New Testament teachings about stewardship which are outlined in a previous chapter. The danger of adopting a narrow meaning of stewardship, which thinks of it only in terms of offerings and gifts, has to be avoided. Stewardship with its full meaning and application, refers to the whole of life. It teaches about God's claim upon man's total existence.

The Christian offering has to be a spiritual one which embraces the whole of life.

> Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. (I Peter 2:5)

These offerings consist of praise,

> By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. (Hebrews 13:15).

of faith,

> Even if I am to be poured as a libation upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. (Phil. 2:17, R.S.V.).

of almsgiving,

> Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings. (Acts 24:17).

> But I have all, and abound; I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God. (Phil. 4: 18).

> But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. (Hebrews 13: 16).

> Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. (James 1: 27).

of giving one's self,

> I beseech you therefore, brethern, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies (soma)[1] a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God, which is your reasonnable service. (Romans 12:1).

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1. Soma is the Greek word which generally speaking refers to the wholeness of a man's personality.

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